時代劇画

JIDAIGEKI COMIC SERIES

ワイド版

鬼平犯科帳

ONIHEI HANKACHO

時代劇シリーズ
HISTORY OF JAPAN COMIC
SPECIAL SELECTION

さいとう・たかを

原作／池波正太郎
脚色／久保田千太郎

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SPコミックス

鬼平犯科帳

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SAITO-PRO
さいとう・たかを
さいとう・プロ作品

ONIHEI,
the Devilish Bureau Chief Vol.1

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Production : Saito Production, Tokyo

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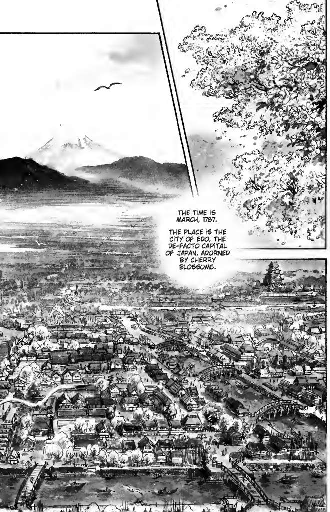
THIS WORK IS AN ILLUSTRATIVE COMPILATION OF STORIES AS APPEARED IN THE MAGAZINE "COMIC RAN" AUTHORED BY SHOTARO IKENAMI.
NAMES OF THE PEOPLE AND PLACES APPEARING HEREIN ARE IRRELEVANT TO THOSE SO IDENTIFIED IN HISTORICAL RECORDS.

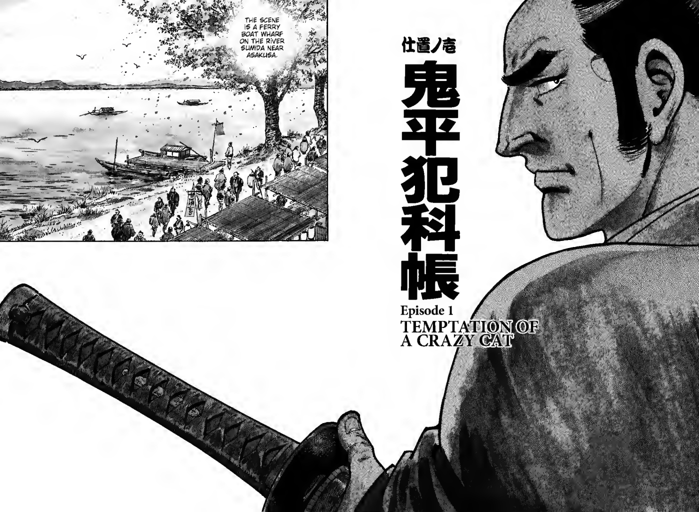

THE TIME IS MARCH, 1787.
THE PLACE IS THE CITY OF EDO, THE DE-FACTO CAPITAL OF JAPAN, ADORNED BY CHERRY BLOSSOMS.

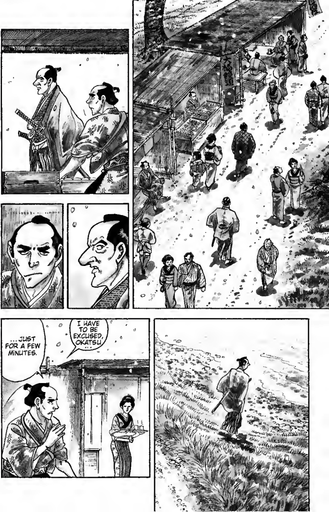
仕置ノ壱

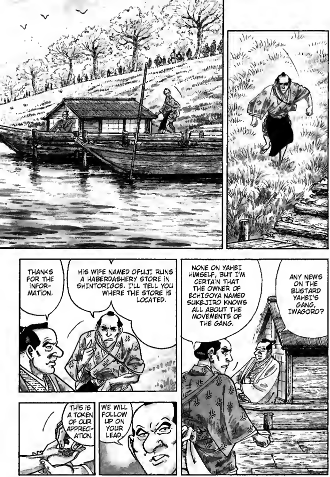
鬼平犯科帳

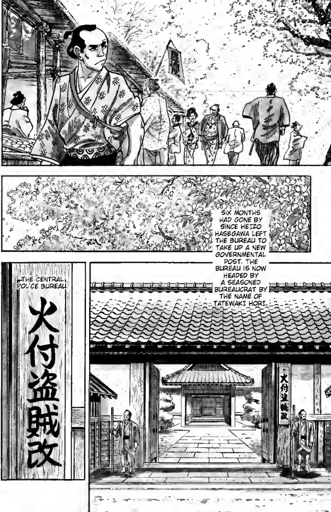
Episode 1

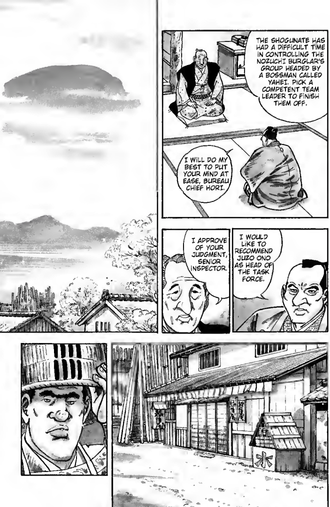
TEMPTATION OF A CRAZY CAT

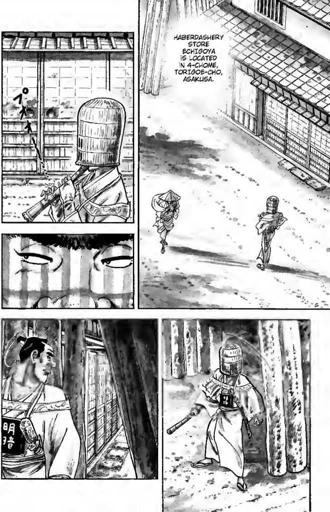

THE SCENE IS A FERRY BOAT WHARF ON THE RIVER SUMIDA NEAR ASAKUSA.

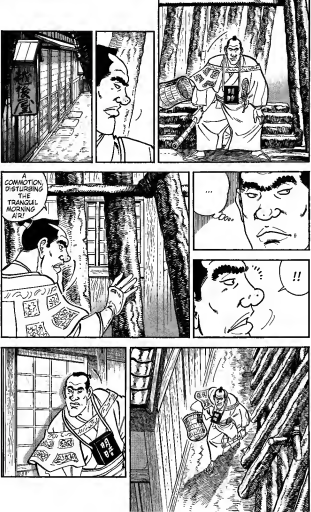

大福饅頭
I HAVE TO BE EXCUSED, OKATSU
...JUST FOR A FEW MINUTES.

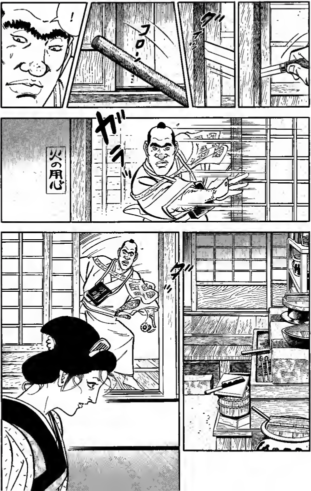

ANY NEWS ON THE BUSTARD YAHEI'S GANG, IWAGORO?
NONE ON YAHEI HIMSELF, BUT I'M CERTAIN THAT THE OWNER OF ECHIGOYA NAMED SUKEJIRO KNOWS ALL ABOUT THE MOVEMENTS OF THE GANG.
HIS WIFE NAMED OFUJI RUNS A HABERDASHERY STORE IN SHINTORIGOE. I'LL TELL YOU WHERE THE STORE IS LOCATED.
THANKS FOR THE INFORMATION.
WE WILL FOLLOW UP ON YOUR LEAD.
THIS IS A TOKEN OF OUR APPRECIATION.

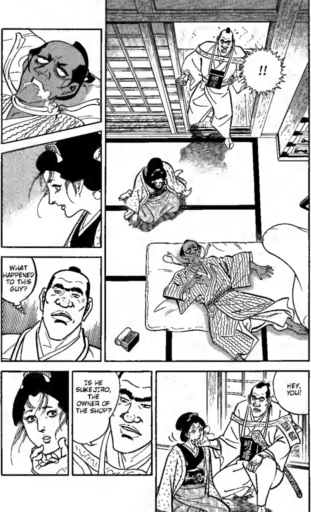

SIX MONTHS HAD GONE BY SINCE HEIZO HASEGAWA LEFT THE BUREAU TO TAKE UP A NEW GOVERNMENTAL POST. THE BUREAU IS NOW HEADED BY A SEASONED BUREAUCRAT BY THE NAME OF TATEWAKI HORI.
火付盗賊改
THE CENTRAL POLICE BUREAU
火付盗賊改

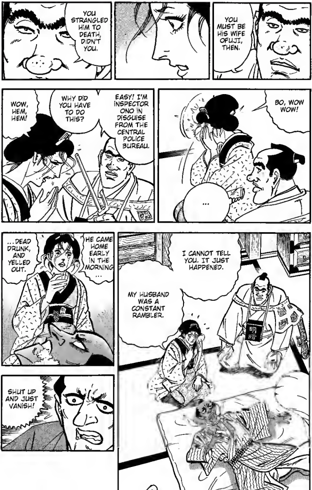

THE SHOGUNATE HAS HAD A DIFFICULT TIME IN CONTROLLING THE NOZUCHI BURGLAR'S GROUP HEADED BY A BOSSMAN CALLED YAHEI. PICK A COMPETENT TEAM LEADER TO FINISH THEM OFF.
I WILL DO MY BEST TO PUT YOUR MIND AT EASE, BUREAU CHIEF HORI.
I WOULD LIKE TO RECOMMEND JUZO ONO AS HEAD OF THE TASK FORCE.
I APPROVE OF YOUR JUDGMENT, SENIOR INSPECTOR.
水

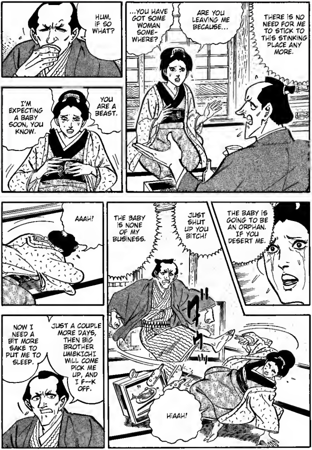

HABERDASHERY STORE ECHIGOYA IS LOCATED IN 4-CHOME, TORIGOE-CHO, ASAKUSA.
ペホホ～
明暗

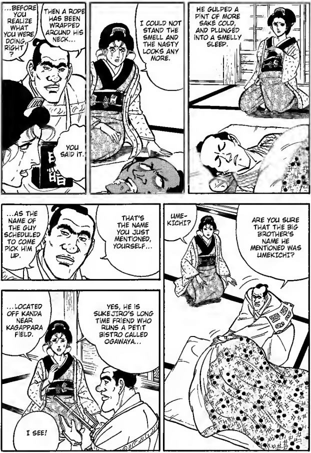

越後屋
A COMMOTION, DISTURBING THE TRANQUIL MORNING AIR!
...
!!

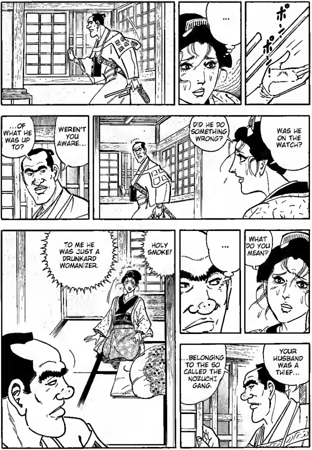

!
コロ…ン
グイッ
ガラッ
火の用心
グ

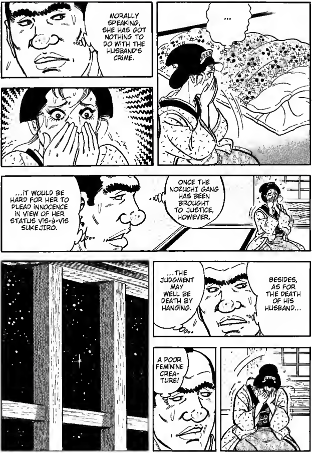

!!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THIS GUY?
IS HE SUKEJIRO, THE OWNER OF THE SHOP?
HEY, YOU!

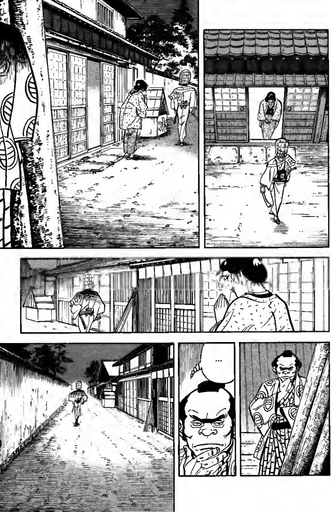

YOU MUST BE HIS WIFE OFUJI, THEN.
YOU STRANGLED HIM TO DEATH, DIDN'T YOU.
BO, WOW WOW!
...
EASY! I'M INSPECTOR ONO IN DISGUISE FROM THE CENTRAL POLICE BUREAU.
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO DO THIS?
WOW, HEM, HEM!
I CANNOT TELL YOU. IT JUST HAPPENED.
MY HUSBAND WAS A CONSTANT RAMBLER.
HE CAME HOME EARLY IN THE MORNING ...
...DEAD DRUNK, AND YELLED OUT.
SHUT UP AND JUST VANISH!

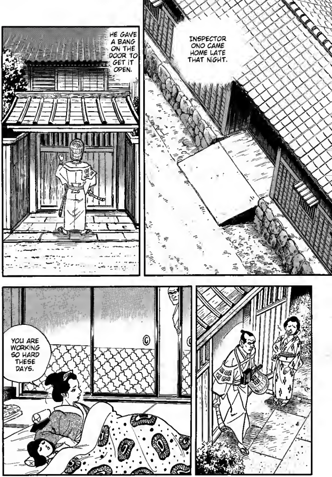

THERE IS NO NEED FOR ME TO STICK TO THIS STINKING PLACE ANY MORE.
ARE YOU LEAVING ME BECAUSE...
...YOU HAVE GOT SOME WOMAN SOMEWHERE?
HUM, IF SO WHAT?
YOU ARE A BEAST.
I'M EXPECTING A BABY SOON, YOU KNOW.
THE BABY IS GOING TO BE AN ORPHAN. IF YOU DESERT ME.
JUST SHUT UP YOU BITCH!
THE BABY IS NONE OF MY BUSINESS.
HIAAH!
AAAH!
JUST A COUPLE MORE DAYS, THEN BIG BROTHER UMEKICHI WILL COME PICK ME UP, AND I F--K OFF.
NOW I NEED A BIT MORE SAKE TO PUT ME TO SLEEP.

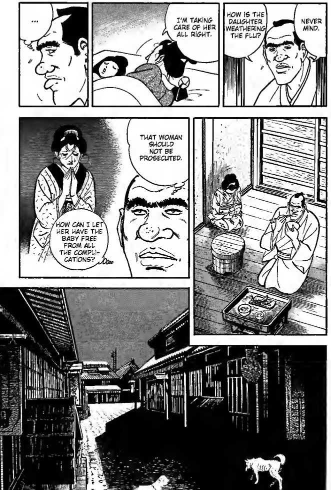

HE GULPED A PINT OF MORE SAKE COLD, AND PLUNGED INTO A SMELLY SLEEP.
I COULD NOT STAND THE SMELL AND THE NASTY LOOKS ANY MORE.
THEN A ROPE HAS BEEN WRAPPED AROUND HIS NECK...
...BEFORE YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU WERE DOING, RIGHT?
YOU SAID IT.
ARE YOU SURE THAT THE BIG BROTHER'S NAME HE MENTIONED WAS UMEKICHI?
UME-KICHI?
THAT'S THE NAME YOU JUST MENTIONED, YOURSELF...
...AS THE NAME OF THE GUY SCHEDULED TO COME PICK HIM UP.
YES, HE IS SUKEJIRO'S LONG TIME FRIEND WHO RUNS A PETIT BISTRO CALLED OGAWAYA...
...LOCATED OFF KANDA NEAR KAGAPPARA FIELD.
I SEE!

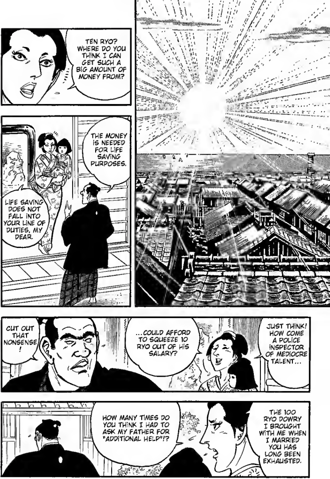

ポン ポン
...
WAS HE ON THE WATCH?
DID HE DO SOMETHING WRONG?
WEREN'T YOU AWARE...
...OF WHAT HE WAS UP TO?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
...
YOUR HUSBAND WAS A THIEF...
...BELONGING TO THE SO CALLED THE NOZUCHI GANG.
HOLY SMOKE!
TO ME HE WAS JUST A DRUNKARD WOMANIZER.

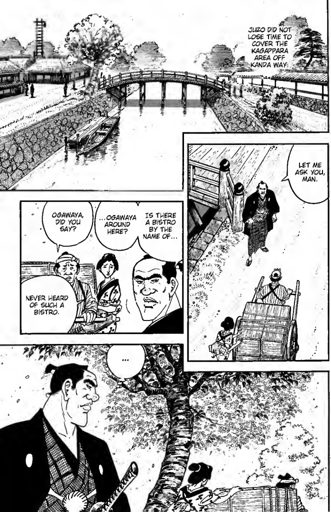

...
MORALLY SPEAKING, SHE HAS GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THE HUSBAND'S CRIME.
ONCE THE NOZUCHI GANG HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO JUSTICE, HOWEVER,
...IT WOULD BE HARD FOR HER TO PLEAD INNOCENCE IN VIEW OF HER STATUS VIS-à-VIS SUKEJIRO.
BESIDES, AS FOR THE DEATH OF HIS HUSBAND...
...THE JUDGMENT MAY WELL BE DEATH BY HANGING.
A POOR FEMININE CREATURE!

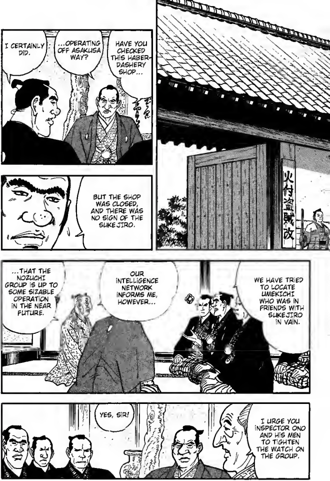


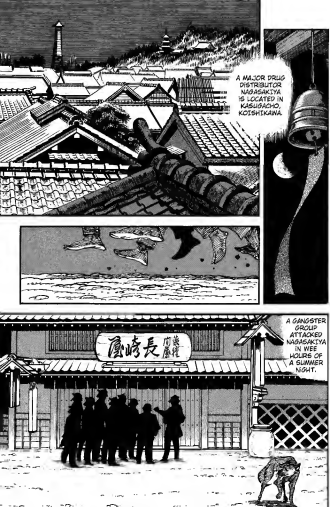

INSPECTOR ONO CAME HOME LATE THAT NIGHT.
HE GAVE A BANG ON THE DOOR TO GET IT OPEN.
YOU ARE WORKING SO HARD THESE DAYS.

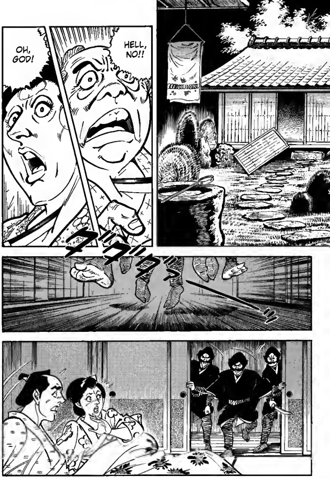

...
I'M TAKING CARE OF HER ALL RIGHT.
HOW IS THE DAUGHTER WEATHERING THE FLU?
NEVER MIND.
THAT WOMAN SHOULD NOT BE PROSECUTED.
HOW CAN I LET HER HAVE THE BABY FREE FROM ALL THE COMPLICATIONS?
Dooo

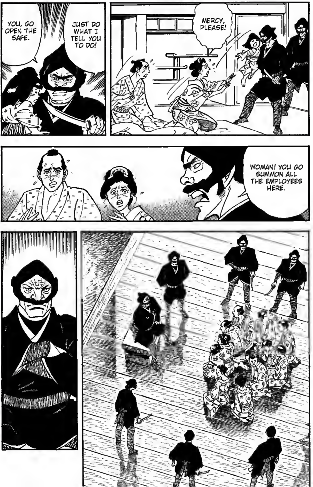

TEN RYO? WHERE DO YOU THINK I CAN GET SUCH A BIG AMOUNT OF MONEY FROM?
THE MONEY IS NEEDED FOR LIFE SAVING PURPOSES.
LIFE SAVING DOES NOT FALL INTO YOUR LINE OF DUTIES, MY DEAR.
JUST THINK! HOW COME A POLICE INSPECTOR OF MEDIOCRE TALENT...
...COULD AFFORD TO SQUEEZE 10 RYO OUT OF HIS SALARY?
CUT OUT THAT NONSENSE!
THE 100 RYO DOWRY I BROUGHT WITH ME WHEN I MARRIED YOU HAS LONG BEEN EXHAUSTED.
HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU THINK I HAD TO ASK MY FATHER FOR "ADDITIONAL HELP"!?

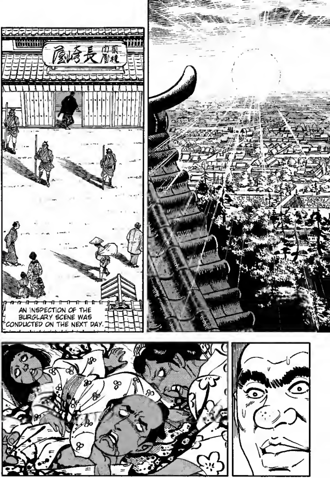

JUZO DID NOT LOSE TIME TO COVER THE KAGAPPARA AREA OFF KANDA WAY.
LET ME ASK YOU, MAN.
IS THERE A BISTRO BY THE NAME OF...
...OGAWAYA AROUND HERE?
OGAWAYA, DID YOU SAY?
NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A BISTRO.
...

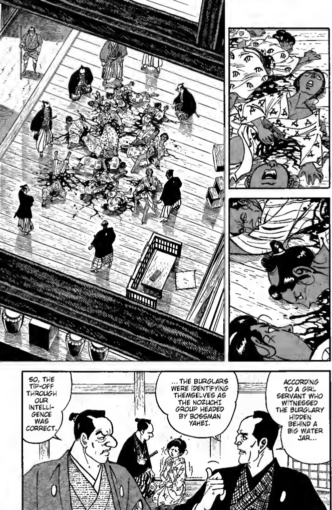

火付盗賊改
HAVE YOU CHECKED THIS HABERDASHERY SHOP...
...OPERATING OFF ASAKUSA WAY?
I CERTAINLY DID.
BUT THE SHOP WAS CLOSED, AND THERE WAS NO SIGN OF THE SUKEJIRO.
WE HAVE TRIED TO LOCATE UMEKICHI WHO WAS IN FRIENDS WITH SUKEJIRO IN VAIN.
OUR INTELLIGENCE NETWORK INFORMS ME, HOWEVER...
...THAT THE NOZUCHI GROUP IS UP TO SOME SIZABLE OPERATION IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
I URGE YOU INSPECTOR ONO AND HIS MEN TO TIGHTEN THE WATCH ON THE GROUP.
YES, SIR!

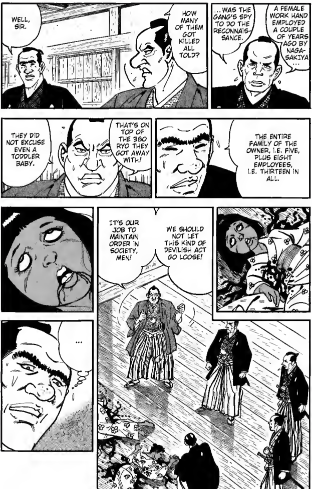

A MAJOR DRUG DISTRIBUTOR NAGASAKIYA IS LOCATED IN KASUGACHO, KOISHIKAWA.
A GANGSTER GROUP ATTACKED NAGASAKIYA IN WEE HOURS OF A SUMMER NIGHT.
長崎屋
薬種問屋

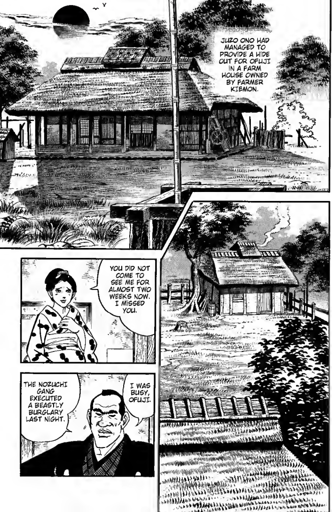

HELL, NO!!
OH, GOD!
ダダダァ

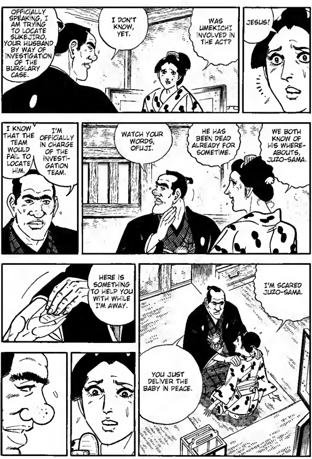

JUST DO WHAT I TELL YOU TO DO!
YOU, GO OPEN THE SAFE.
MERCY, PLEASE!
WOMAN! YOU GO SUMMON ALL THE EMPLOYEES HERE.

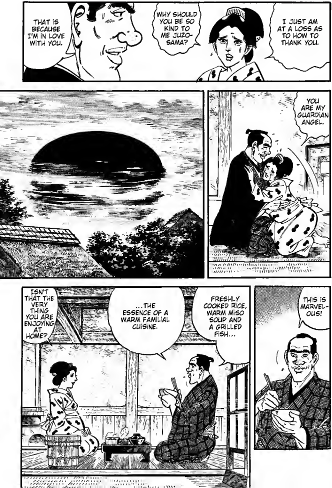

薬種問屋 長崎屋
AN INSPECTION OF THE BURGLARY SCENE WAS CONDUCTED ON THE NEXT DAY.

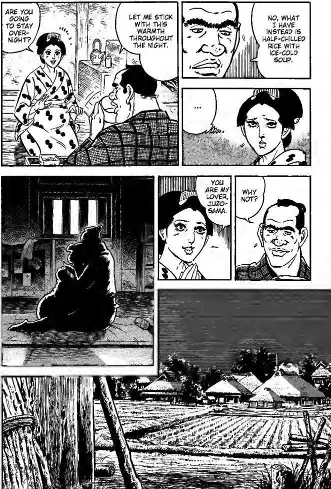

ACCORDING TO A GIRL SERVANT WHO WITNESSED THE BURGLARY HIDDEN BEHIND A BIG WATER JAR...
...THE BURGLARS WERE IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS THE NOZUCHI GROUP HEADED BY BOSSMAN YAHEI.
SO, THE TIP-OFF THROUGH OUR INTELLIGENCE WAS CORRECT.

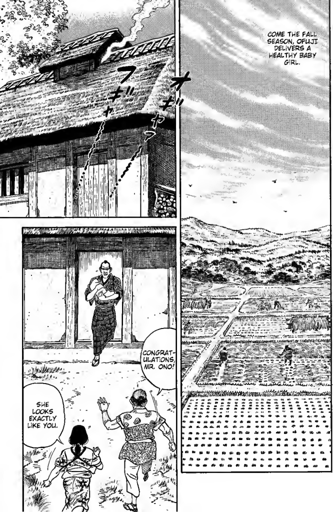

WELL, SIR.
HOW MANY OF THEM GOT KILLED ALL TOLD?
A FEMALE WORK HAND EMPLOYED A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO BY NAGASAKIYA...
..WAS THE GANG'S SPY TO DO THE RECONNAISSANCE.
THEY DID NOT EXCUSE EVEN A TODDLER BABY.
THAT'S ON TOP OF THE 380 RYO THEY GOT AWAY WITH!
THE ENTIRE FAMILY OF THE OWNER, I.E. FIVE, PLUS EIGHT EMPLOYEES, I.E. THIRTEEN IN ALL.
IT'S OUR JOB TO MAINTAIN ORDER IN SOCIETY, MEN!
WE SHOULD NOT LET THIS KIND OF DEVILISH ACT GO LOOSE!
...


JUZO ONO HAD MANAGED TO PROVIDE A HIDE OUT FOR OFUJI IN A FARM HOUSE OWNED BY FARMER KIEMON.
YOU DID NOT COME TO SEE ME FOR ALMOST TWO WEEKS NOW. I MISSED YOU.
I WAS BUSY, OFUJI.
THE NOZUCHI GANG EXECUTED A BEASTLY BURGLARY LAST NIGHT.


OFFICIALLY SPEAKING, I AM TRYING TO LOCATE SUKEJIRO, YOUR HUSBAND BY WAY OF INVESTIGATION OF THE BURGLARY CASE.
I DON'T KNOW, YET.
WAS UMEKICHI INVOLVED IN THE ACT?
JESUS!
I KNOW THAT THE TEAM WOULD FAIL TO LOCATE HIM.
I'M OFFICIALLY IN CHARGE OF THE INVESTIGATION TEAM.
WATCH YOUR WORDS, OFUJI.
HE HAS BEEN DEAD ALREADY FOR SOMETIME.
WE BOTH KNOW OF HIS WHEREABOUTS, JUZO-SAMA.
HERE IS SOMETHING TO HELP YOU WITH WHILE I'M AWAY.
I'M SCARED JUZO-SAMA.
YOU JUST DELIVER THE BABY IN PEACE.


I JUST AM AT A LOSS AS TO HOW TO THANK YOU.
WHY SHOULD YOU BE SO KIND TO ME JUZO-SAMA?
THAT IS BECAUSE I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU.
YOU ARE MY GUARDIAN ANGEL.
THIS IS MARVELOUS!
FRESHLY COOKED RICE, WARM MISO SOUP AND A GRILLED FISH...
...THE ESSENCE OF A WARM FAMILIAL CUISINE.
ISN'T THAT THE VERY THING YOU ARE ENJOYING AT HOME?


ARE YOU GOING TO STAY OVER-NIGHT?
LET ME STICK WITH THIS WARMTH THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT.
NO, WHAT I HAVE INSTEAD IS HALF-CHILLED RICE WITH ICE-COLD SOUP.
...
YOU ARE MY LOVER, JUZO-SAMA.
WHY NOT?


COME THE FALL SEASON, OFUJI DELIVERS A HEALTHY BABY GIRL.
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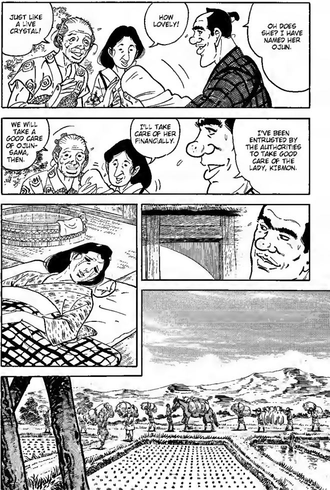
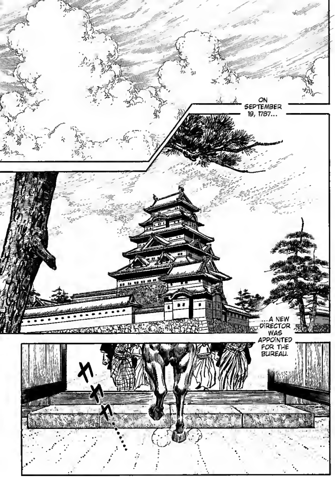
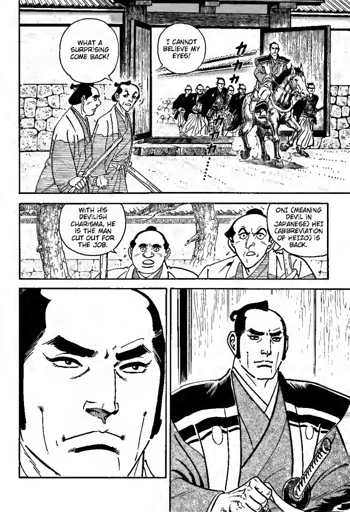
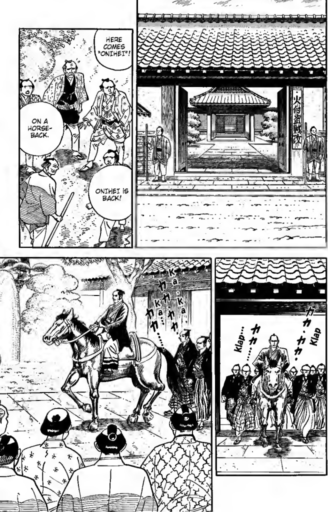
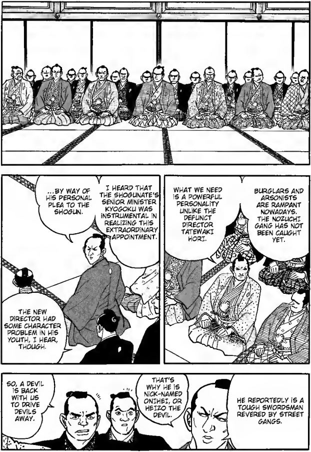
CONGRATULATIONS, MR. ONO!
SHE LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE YOU.

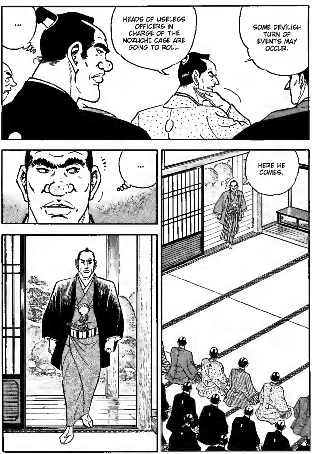

JUST LIKE A LIVE CRYSTAL!
HOW LOVELY!
OH DOES SHE? I HAVE NAMED HER OJUN.
WE WILL TAKE A GOOD CARE OF OJUN-SAMA, THEN.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER FINANCIALLY.
I'VE BEEN ENTRUSTED BY THE AUTHORITIES TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF THE LADY, KIEMON.

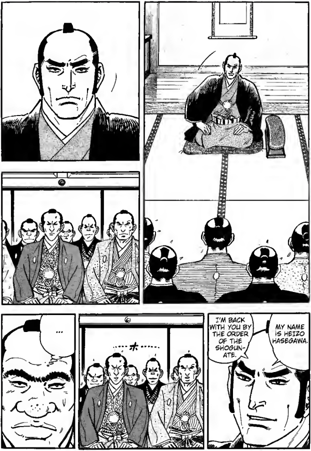

ON SEPTEMBER 19, 1787...
...A NEW DIRECTOR WAS APPOINTED FOR THE BUREAU.
カカカ……

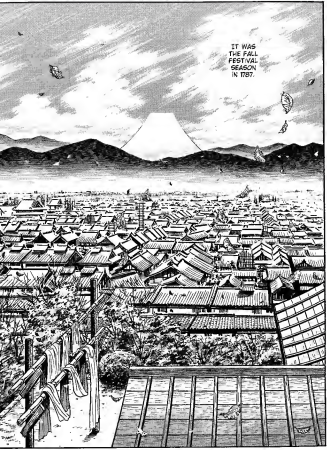

I CANNOT BELIEVE MY EYES!
カカカ
カカカ
WHAT A SURPRISING COME BACK!
ONI (MEANING DEVIL IN JAPANESE) HEI (ABBREVIATION OF HEIZO) IS BACK.
WITH HIS DEVILISH CHARISMA, HE IS THE MAN CUT OUT FOR THE JOB.

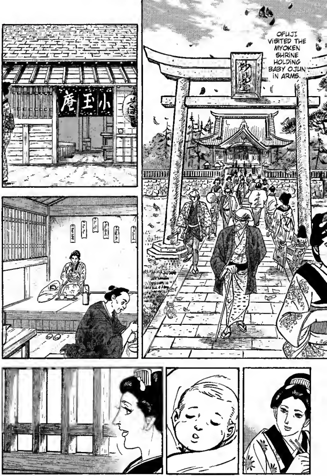

火付盗賊改
HERE COMES "ONIHEI"!
ON A HORSE-BACK.
ONIHEI IS BACK!
カカ・カカカ・
Klap
カカ……
Klap…
Ka・Ka・
カカカ・
Ka…
カカカ……

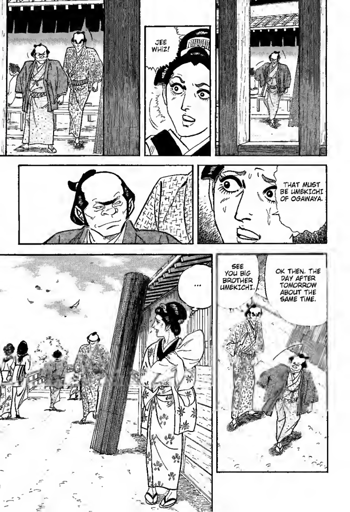

BURGLARS AND ARSONISTS ARE RAMPANT NOWADAYS. THE NOZUCHI GANG HAS NOT BEEN CAUGHT YET.
WHAT WE NEED IS A POWERFUL PERSONALITY UNLIKE THE DEFUNCT DIRECTOR TATEWAKI HORI.
I HEARD THAT THE SHOGUNATE'S SENIOR MINISTER KYOGOKU WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN REALIZING THIS EXTRAORDINARY APPOINTMENT.
...BY WAY OF HIS PERSONAL PLEA TO THE SHOGUN.
THE NEW DIRECTOR HAD SOME CHARACTER PROBLEM IN HIS YOUTH, I HEAR, THOUGH.
HE REPORTEDLY IS A TOUGH SWORDSMAN REVERED BY STREET GANGS.
THAT'S WHY HE IS NICK-NAMED ONIHEI, OR HEIZO THE DEVIL.
SO, A DEVIL IS BACK WITH US TO DRIVE DEVILS AWAY.

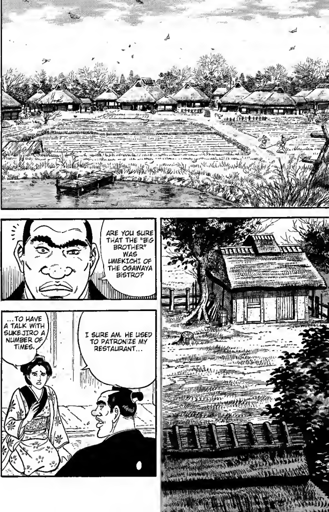

...
HEADS OF USELESS OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF THE NOZUCHI CASE ARE GOING TO ROLL.
SOME DEVILISH TURN OF EVENTS MAY OCCUR.
...
HERE HE COMES.

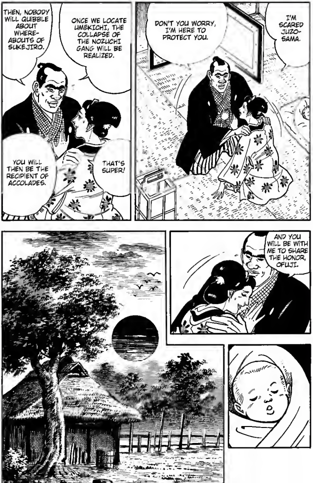

...
.....ホ.....
I'M BACK WITH YOU BY THE ORDER OF THE SHOGUNATE.
MY NAME IS HEIZO HASEGAWA.

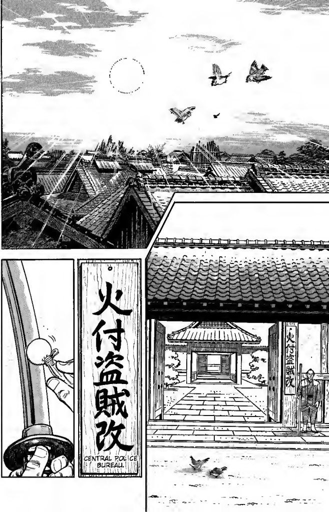

IT WAS THE FALL FESTIVAL SEASON IN 1787.

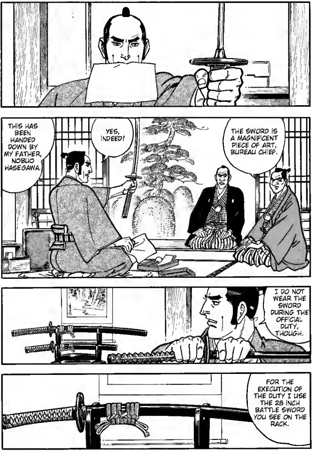

小玉庵
OFUJI VISITED THE MYOKEN SHRINE HOLDING BABY OJUN IN ARMS.

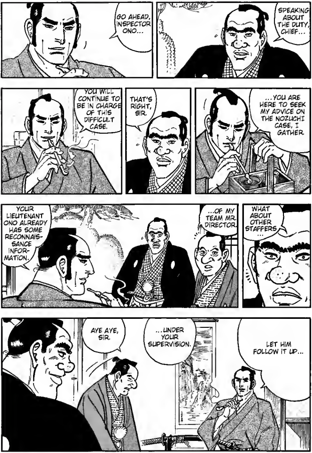

JEE WHIZ!
THAT MUST BE UMEKICHI OF OGAWAYA.
...
SEE YOU BIG BROTHER UMEKICHI..
OK THEN. THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW ABOUT THE SAME TIME.

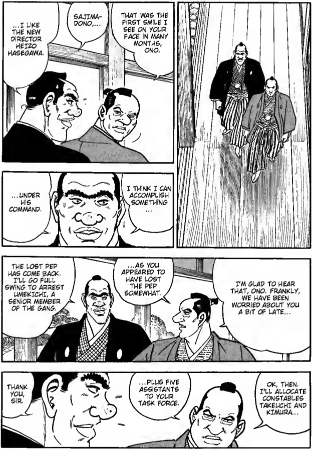

ARE YOU SURE THAT THE "BIG BROTHER" WAS UMEKICHI OF THE OGAWAYA BISTRO?
I SURE AM. HE USED TO PATRONIZE MY RESTAURANT...
...TO HAVE A TALK WITH SUKEJIRO A NUMBER OF TIMES.

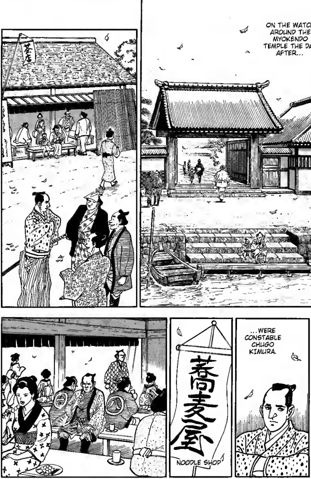

ONCE WE LOCATE UMEKICHI, THE COLLAPSE OF THE NOZUCHI GANG WILL BE REALIZED.
THEN, NOBODY WILL QUIBBLE ABOUT WHEREABOUTS OF SUKEJIRO.
YOU WILL THEN BE THE RECIPIENT OF ACCOLADES.
THAT'S SUPER!
I'M SCARED JUZO-SAMA.
DON'T YOU WORRY, I'M HERE TO PROTECT YOU.
AND YOU WILL BE WITH ME TO SHARE THE HONOR, OFUJI.

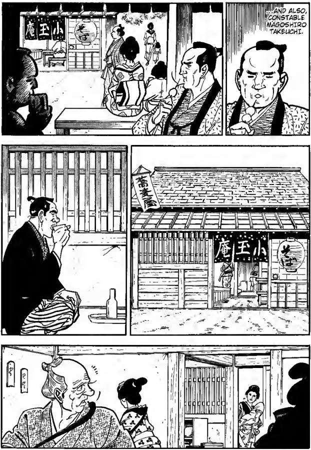

火付盗賊改
火付盗賊改
CENTRAL POLICE BUREAU.

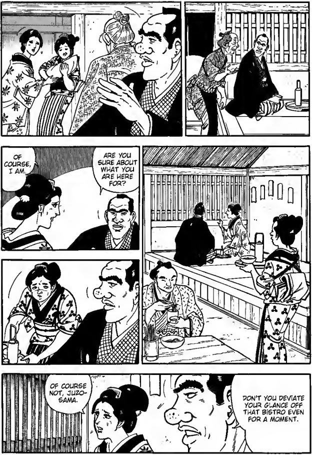

THE SWORD IS A MAGNIFICENT PIECE OF ART, BUREAU CHIEF.
YES, INDEED!
THIS HAS BEEN HANDED DOWN BY MY FATHER, NOBUO HASEGAWA.
I DO NOT WEAR THE SWORD DURING THE OFFICIAL DUTY, THOUGH.
FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE DUTY I USE THE 28 INCH BATTLE SWORD YOU SEE ON THE RACK.

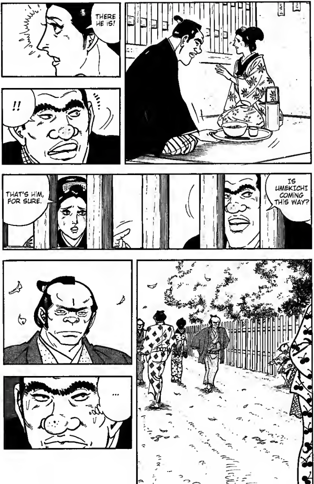

SPEAKING ABOUT THE DUTY, CHIEF...
GO AHEAD, INSPECTOR ONO...
...YOU ARE HERE TO SEEK MY ADVICE ON THE NOZUCHI CASE, I GATHER.
THAT'S RIGHT, SIR.
YOU WILL CONTINUE TO BE IN CHARGE OF THIS DIFFICULT CASE.
WHAT ABOUT OTHER STAFFERS...
...OF MY TEAM MR. DIRECTOR.
YOUR LIEUTENANT ONO ALREADY HAS SOME RECONNAISSANCE INFORMATION.
LET HIM FOLLOW IT UP...
...UNDER YOUR SUPERVISION.
AYE AYE, SIR.

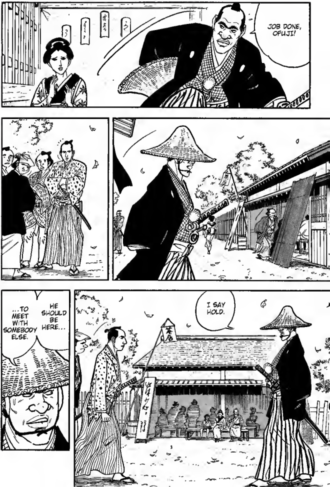

THAT WAS THE FIRST SMILE I SEE ON YOUR FACE IN MANY MONTHS, ONO.
SAJIMA-DONO,...
...I LIKE THE NEW DIRECTOR HEIZO HASEGAWA.
I THINK I CAN ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING ...
...UNDER HIS COMMAND.
I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT, ONO. FRANKLY, WE HAVE BEEN WORRIED ABOUT YOU A BIT OF LATE...
...AS YOU APPEARED TO HAVE LOST THE PEP SOMEWHAT.
THE LOST PEP HAS COME BACK. I'LL GO FULL SWING TO ARREST UMEKICHI, A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE GANG.
OK, THEN. I'LL ALLOCATE CONSTABLES TAKEUCHI AND KIMURA...
...PLUS FIVE ASSISTANTS TO YOUR TASK FORCE.
THANK YOU, SIR.

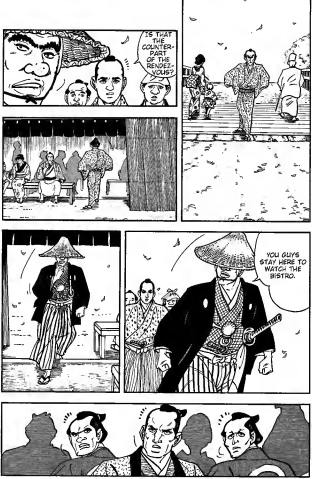

ON THE WATCH AROUND THE MYOKENDO TEMPLE THE DAY AFTER...
茶店
...WERE CONSTABLE CHUGO KIMURA.
蕎麦屋
NOODLE SHOP

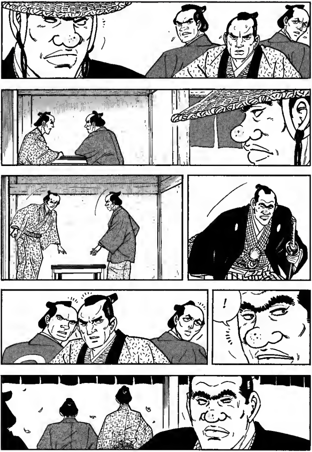

...AND ALSO, CONSTABLE MAGOSHIRO TAKEUCHI.
小王庵
蕎麦屋
小王庵
そば

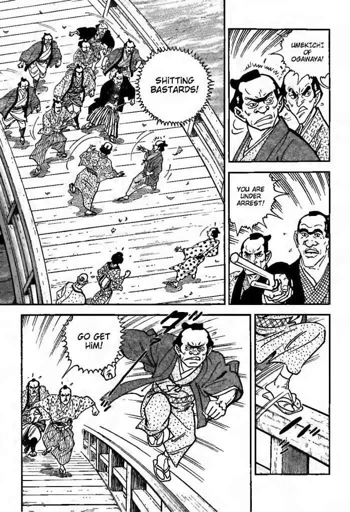

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE HERE FOR?
OF COURSE, I AM.
DON'T YOU DEVIATE YOUR GLANCE OFF THAT BISTRO EVEN FOR A MOMENT.
OF COURSE NOT, JUZO-SAMA.

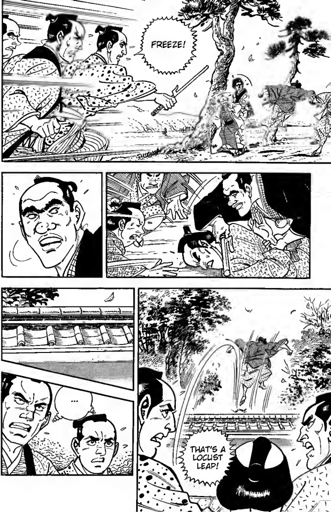

THERE HE IS!
!!
IS UMEKICHI COMING THIS WAY?
THAT'S HIM, FOR SURE.
...

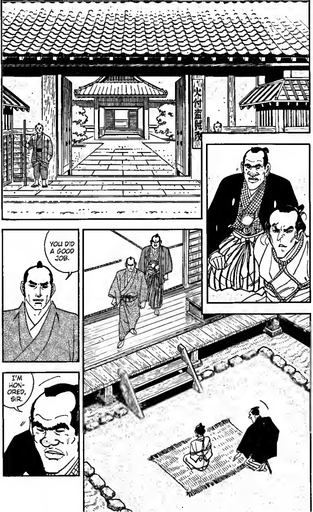

JOB DONE, OFUJI!
...TO MEET WITH SOMEBODY ELSE.
HE SHOULD BE HERE...
I SAY HOLD.

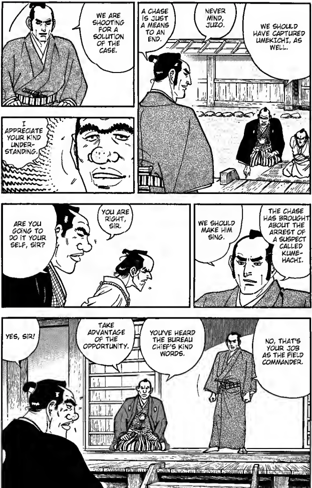

IS THAT THE COUNTER-PART OF THE RENDEZ-VOUS?
YOU GUYS STAY HERE TO WATCH THE BISTRO.

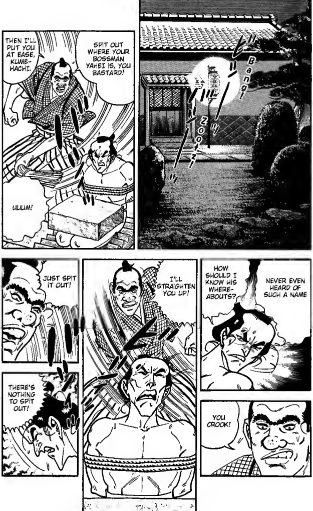


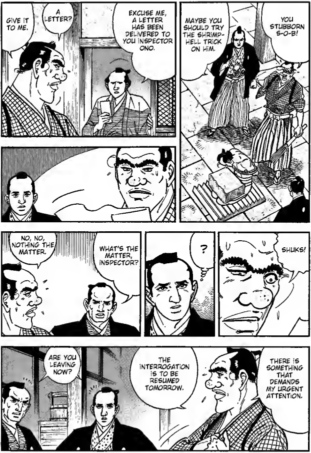

UMEKICHI OF OGAWAYA!
YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!
SHITTING BASTARDS!
GO GET HIM!

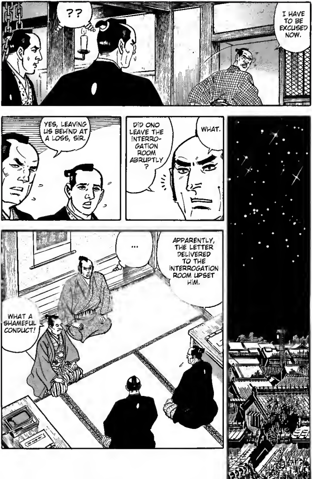

FREEZE!
...
THAT'S A LOCUST LEAP!

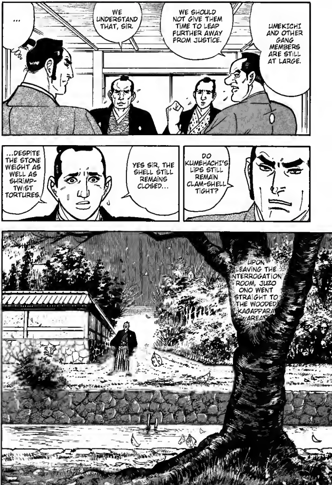

火付盗賊改
YOU DID A GOOD JOB.
I'M HONORED, SIR.

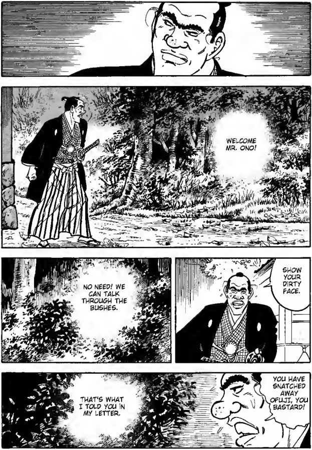

WE SHOULD HAVE CAPTURED UMEKICHI, AS WELL.
NEVER MIND, JUZO.
A CHASE IS JUST A MEANS TO AN END.
WE ARE SHOOTING FOR A SOLUTION OF THE CASE.
I APPRECIATE YOUR KIND UNDERSTANDING.
THE CHASE HAS BROUGHT ABOUT THE ARREST OF A SUSPECT CALLED KUMEHACHI.
WE SHOULD MAKE HIM SING.
YOU ARE RIGHT, SIR.
ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT YOURSELF, SIR?
NO, THAT'S YOUR JOB AS THE FIELD COMMANDER.
YOU'VE HEARD THE BUREAU CHIEF'S KIND WORDS.
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY.
YES, SIR!

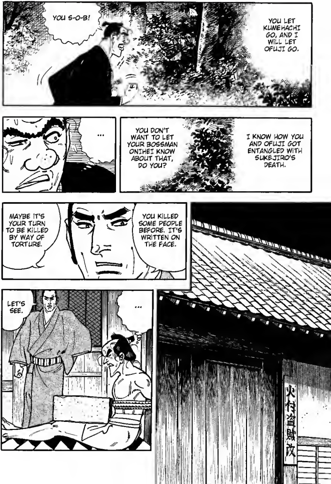

THEN I'LL PUT YOU AT EASE, KUME-HACHI.
SPIT OUT WHERE YOUR BOSSMAN YAHEI IS, YOU BASTARD!
UUUM!
Bang!
Zoooz!
JUST SPIT IT OUT!
THERE'S NOTHING TO SPIT OUT!
I'LL STRAIGHTEN YOU UP!
HOW SHOULD I KNOW HIS WHERE-ABOUTS?
NEVER EVEN HEARD OF SUCH A NAME
YOU CROOK!

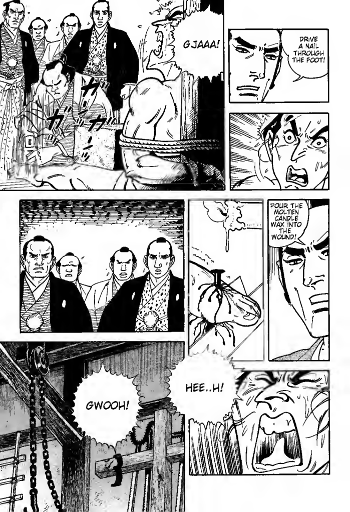

YOU STUBBORN S-O-B!
MAYBE YOU SHOULD TRY THE SHRIMP-HELL TRICK ON HIM.
EXCUSE ME, A LETTER HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO YOU INSPECTOR ONO.
A LETTER?
GIVE IT TO ME.
SHUKS!
?
WHAT'S THE MATTER, INSPECTOR?
NO, NO, NOTHING THE MATTER.
THERE IS SOMETHING THAT DEMANDS MY URGENT ATTENTION.
THE INTERROGATION IS TO BE RESUMED TOMORROW.
ARE YOU LEAVING NOW?

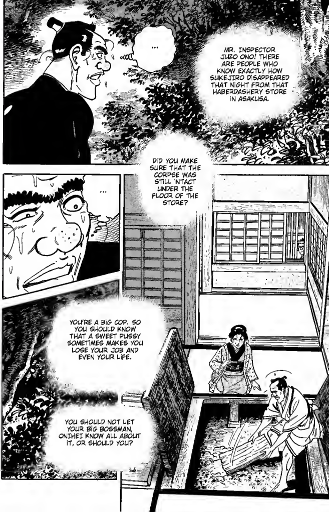

I HAVE TO BE EXCUSED NOW.
??
WHAT.
DID ONO LEAVE THE INTERROGATION ROOM ABRUPTLY?
YES, LEAVING US BEHIND AT A LOSS, SIR.
APPARENTLY, THE LETTER DELIVERED TO THE INTERROGATION ROOM UPSET HIM.
...
WHAT A SHAMEFUL CONDUCT!

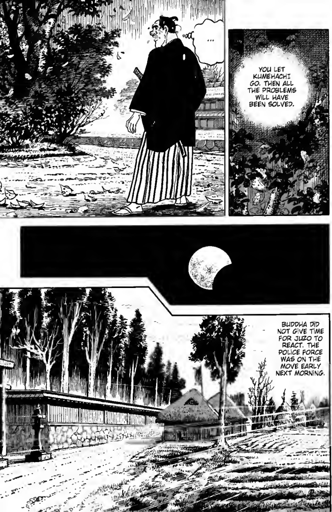

UMEKICHI AND OTHER GANG MEMBERS ARE STILL AT LARGE.
WE SHOULD NOT GIVE THEM TIME TO LEAP FURTHER AWAY FROM JUSTICE.
WE UNDERSTAND THAT, SIR.
...
DO KUMEHACHI'S LIPS STILL REMAIN CLAM-SHELL TIGHT?
YES SIR, THE SHELL STILL REMAINS CLOSED...
...DESPITE THE STONE WEIGHT AS WELL AS SHRIMP-TWIST TORTURES.
UPON LEAVING THE INTERROGATION ROOM, JUZO ONO WENT STRAIGHT TO THE WOODED KAGAPPARA AREA.

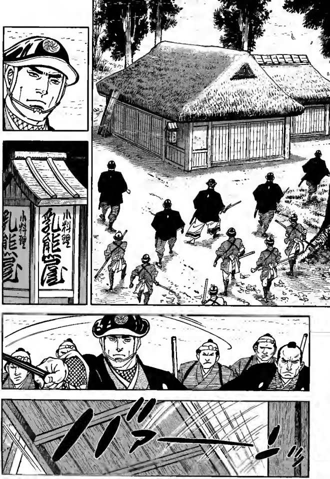

WELCOME MR. ONO!
NO NEED! WE CAN TALK THROUGH THE BUSHES.
SHOW YOUR DIRTY FACE.
THAT'S WHAT I TOLD YOU IN MY LETTER.
YOU HAVE SNATCHED AWAY OFUJI, YOU BASTARD!

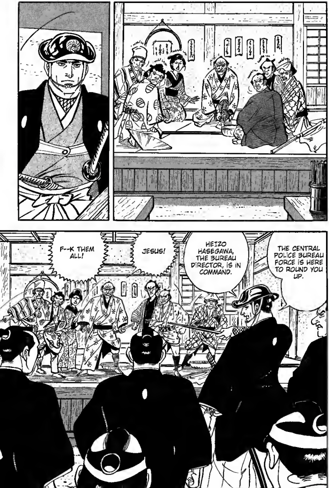

YOU LET KUMEHACHI GO, AND I WILL LET OFUJI GO.
YOU S-O-B!
I KNOW HOW YOU AND OFUJI GOT ENTANGLED WITH SUKEJIRO'S DEATH.
YOU DON'T WANT TO LET YOUR BOSSMAN ONIHEI KNOW ABOUT THAT, DO YOU?
...
YOU KILLED SOME PEOPLE BEFORE. IT'S WRITTEN ON THE FACE.
MAYBE IT'S YOUR TURN TO BE KILLED BY WAY OF TORTURE.
火付盗賊改
...
LET'S SEE.

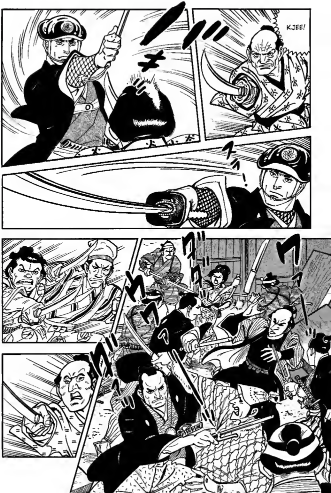

DRIVE A NAIL THROUGH THE FOOT!
GJAAA!
ガッ
ガッ
ガーッ
POUR THE MOLTEN CANDLE WAX INTO THE WOUND!
HEE..H!
GWOOH!

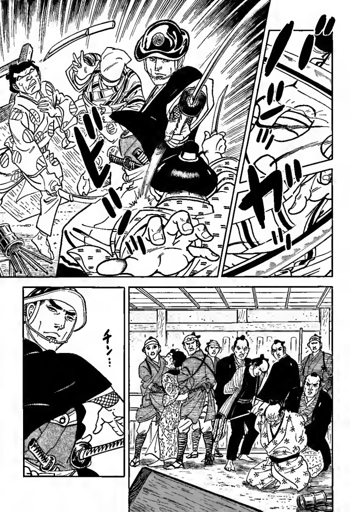

MR. INSPECTOR JUZO ONO! THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO KNOW EXACTLY HOW SUKEJIRO DISAPPEARED THAT NIGHT FROM THAT HABERDASHERY STORE IN ASAKUSA.
...
DID YOU MAKE SURE THAT THE CORPSE WAS STILL INTACT UNDER THE FLOOR OF THE STORE?
...
YOU'RE A BIG COP. SO YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT A SWEET PUSSY SOMETIMES MAKES YOU LOSE YOUR JOB AND EVEN YOUR LIFE.
YOU SHOULD NOT LET YOUR BIG BOSSMAN, ONIHEI KNOW ALL ABOUT IT, OR SHOULD YOU?

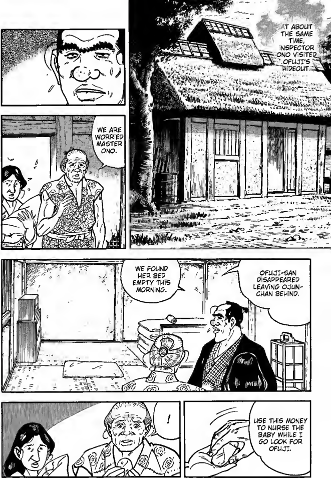

YOU LET KUMEHACHI GO. THEN ALL THE PROBLEMS WILL HAVE BEEN SOLVED.
...
BUDDHA DID NOT GIVE TIME FOR JUZO TO REACT. THE POLICE FORCE WAS ON THE MOVE EARLY NEXT MORNING.

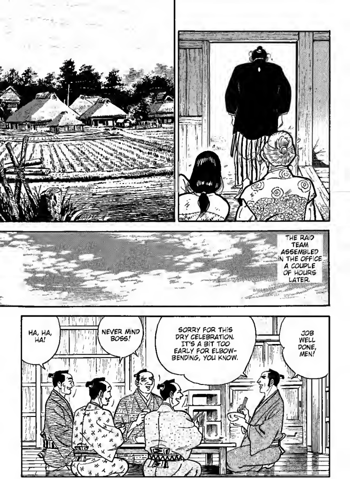

小料理
乳熊屋
小料理
乳熊屋
ババアーーッ

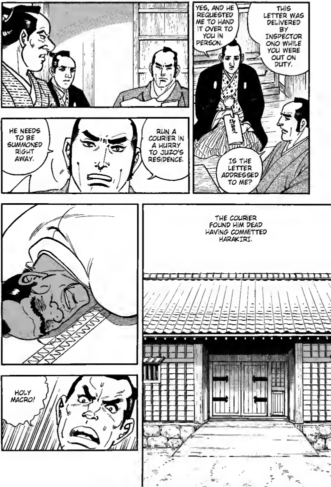

THE CENTRAL POLICE BUREAU FORCE IS HERE TO ROUND YOU UP.
HEIZO HASEGAWA, THE BUREAU DIRECTOR, IS IN COMMAND.
JESUS!
F--K THEM ALL!

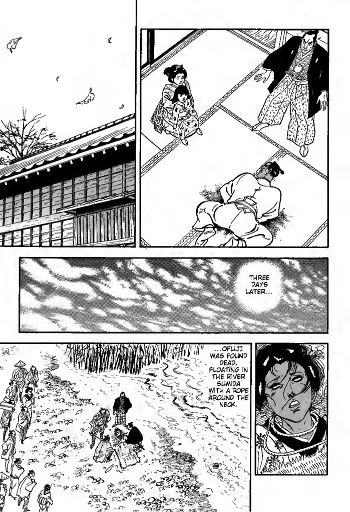

KJEE!

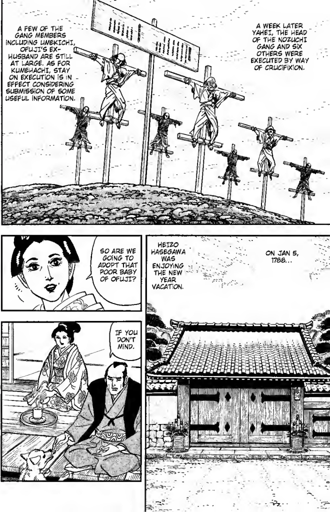

バッ
ザッ
ビーッ
チン…

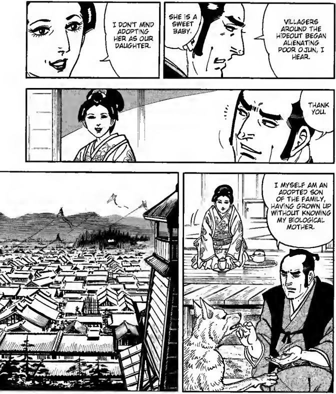

AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME, INSPECTOR ONO VISITED OFUJI'S HIDEOUT.
WE ARE WORRIED MASTER ONO.
OFUJI-SAN DISAPPEARED LEAVING OJUN-CHAN BEHIND.
WE FOUND HER BED EMPTY THIS MORNING.
USE THIS MONEY TO NURSE THE BABY WHILE I GO LOOK FOR OFUJI.
!


THE RAID TEAM ASSEMBLED IN THE OFFICE A COUPLE OF HOURS LATER.
JOB WELL DONE, MEN!
SORRY FOR THIS DRY CELEBRATION. IT'S A BIT TOO EARLY FOR ELBOW-BENDING, YOU KNOW.
NEVER MIND BOSS!
HA, HA, HA!

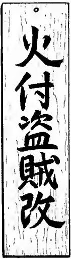

THIS LETTER WAS DELIVERED BY INSPECTOR ONO WHILE YOU WERE OUT ON DUTY.
YES, AND HE REQUESTED ME TO HAND IT OVER TO YOU IN PERSON.
IS THE LETTER ADDRESSED TO ME?
RUN A COURIER IN A HURRY TO JUZO'S RESIDENCE.
HE NEEDS TO BE SUMMONED RIGHT AWAY.
THE COURIER FOUND HIM DEAD HAVING COMMITTED HARAKIRI.
HOLY MACRO!

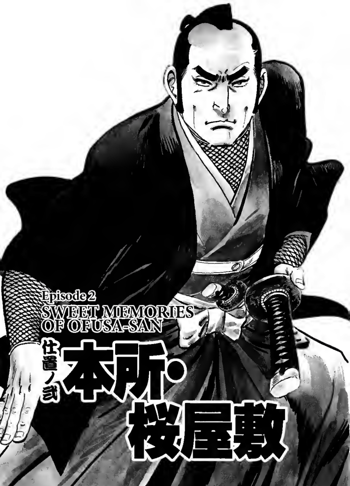

THREE DAYS LATER...
...OFUJI WAS FOUND DEAD, FLOATING IN THE RIVER SUMIDA WITH A ROPE AROUND THE NECK.


A WEEK LATER YAHEI, THE HEAD OF THE NOZUCHI GANG AND SIX OTHERS WERE EXECUTED BY WAY OF CRUCIFIXION.
A FEW OF THE GANG MEMBERS INCLUDING UMEKICHI, OFUJI'S EX-HUSBAND ARE STILL AT LARGE. AS FOR KUMEHACHI, STAY ON EXECUTION IS IN EFFECT CONSIDERING SUBMISSION OF SOME USEFUL INFORMATION.
ON JAN 5, 1788...
HEIZO HASEGAWA WAS ENJOYING THE NEW YEAR VACATION.
SO ARE WE GOING TO ADOPT THAT POOR BABY OF OFUJI?
IF YOU DON'T MIND.


VILLAGERS AROUND THE HIDEOUT BEGAN ALIENATING POOR OJUN, I HEAR.
SHE IS A SWEET BABY.
I DON'T MIND ADOPTING HER AS OUR DAUGHTER.
THANK YOU.
I MYSELF AM AN ADOPTED SON OF THE FAMILY, HAVING GROWN UP WITHOUT KNOWING MY BIOLOGICAL MOTHER.

END


火付盗賊改

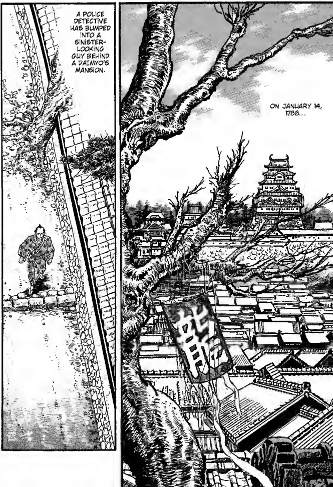


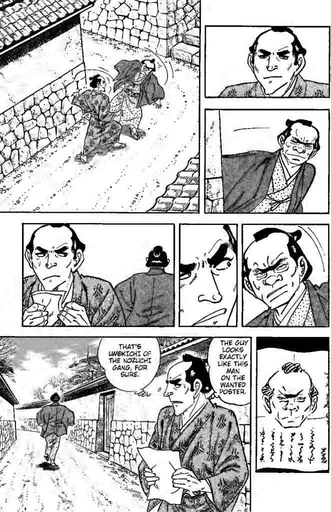
Episode 2

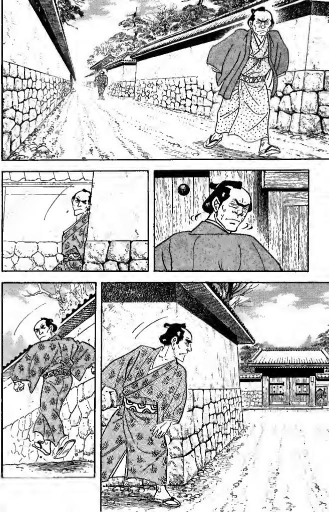
SWEET MEMORIES OF OFUSA-SAN

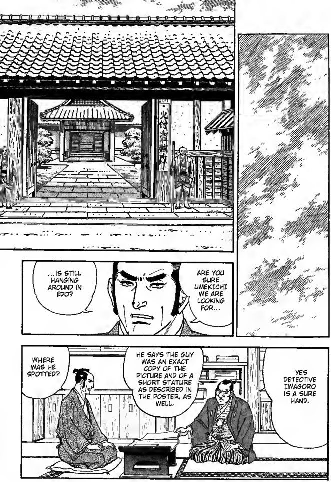
仕置ノ弐

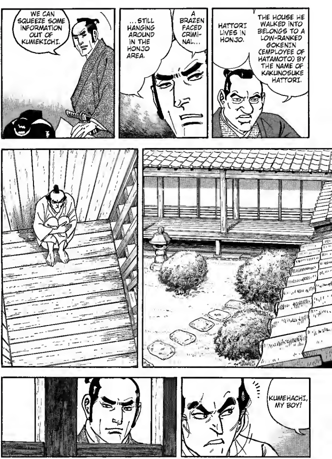
本所・桜屋敷

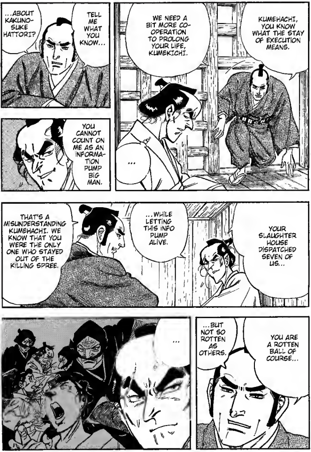

ON JANUARY 14, 1788...
A POLICE DETECTIVE HAS BUMPED INTO A SINISTER-LOOKING GUY BEHIND A DAIMYO'S MANSION.

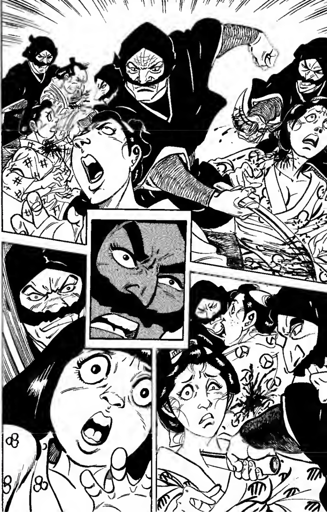

THE GUY LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE THIS MAN ON THE WANTED POSTER.
THAT'S UMEKICHI OF THE NOZUCHI GANG, FOR SURE.

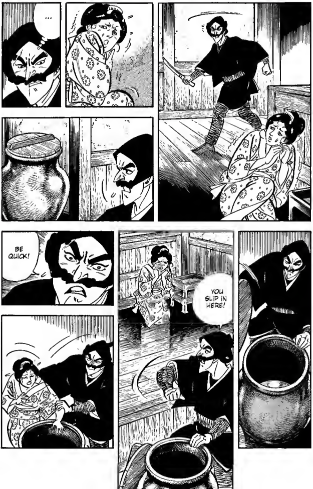


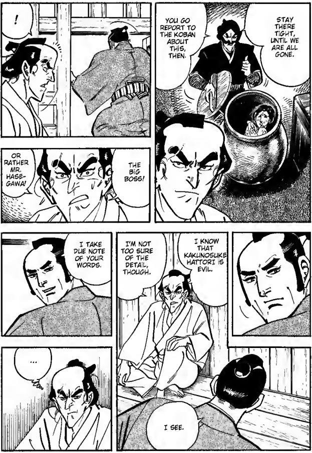

火付盗賊改
ARE YOU SURE UMEKICHI WE ARE LOOKING FOR...
...IS STILL HANGING AROUND IN EDO?
YES DETECTIVE IWAGORO IS A SURE HAND.
HE SAYS THE GUY WAS AN EXACT COPY OF THE PICTURE AND OF A SHORT STATURE AS DESCRIBED IN THE POSTER, AS WELL.
WHERE WAS HE SPOTTED?

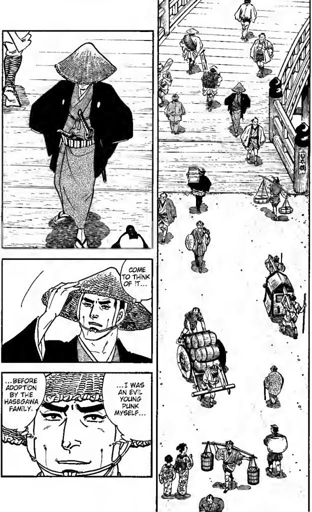

THE HOUSE HE WALKED INTO BELONGS TO A LOW-RANKED GOKENIN (EMPLOYEE OF HATAMOTO) BY THE NAME OF KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI.
HATTORI LIVES IN HONJO.
A BRAZEN FACED CRIMINAL...
...STILL HANGING AROUND IN THE HONJO AREA.
WE CAN SQUEEZE SOME INFORMATION OUT OF KUMEKICHI.
KUMEHACHI, MY BOY!


TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW...
...ABOUT KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI?
KUMEHACHI, YOU KNOW WHAT THE STAY OF EXECUTION MEANS.
WE NEED A BIT MORE CO-OPERATION TO PROLONG YOUR LIFE, KUMEKICHI.
...
YOU CANNOT COUNT ON ME AS AN INFORMATION PUMP BIG MAN.
YOUR SLAUGHTER HOUSE DISPATCHED SEVEN OF US...
...WHILE LETTING THIS INFO PUMP ALIVE.
THAT'S A MISUNDERSTANDING KUMEHACHI. WE KNOW THAT YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO STAYED OUT OF THE KILLING SPREE.
YOU ARE A ROTTEN BALL OF COURSE...
...BUT NOT SO ROTTEN AS OTHERS.
...




...
BE QUICK!
YOU SLIP IN HERE!


STAY THERE TIGHT, UNTIL WE ARE ALL GONE.
YOU GO REPORT TO THE KOBAN ABOUT THIS, THEN.
!
THE BIG BOSS!
OR RATHER MR. HASEGAWA!
I KNOW THAT KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI IS EVIL.
I'M NOT TOO SURE OF THE DETAIL, THOUGH.
I TAKE DUE NOTE OF YOUR WORDS.
I SEE.
...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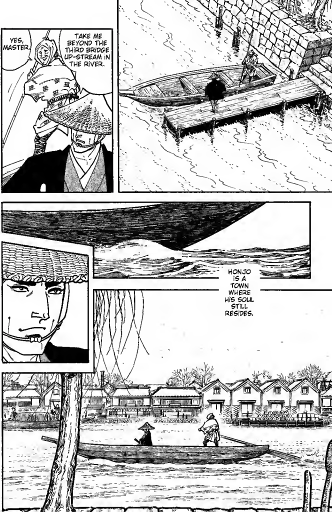
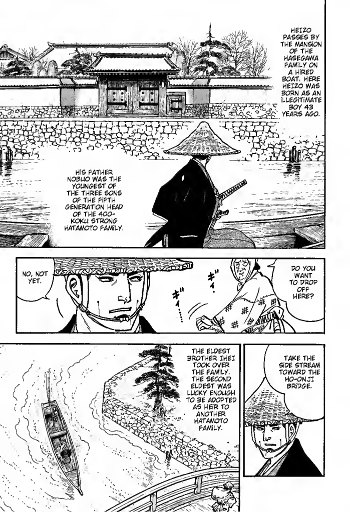
COME TO THINK OF IT...
...I WAS AN EVIL YOUNG PUNK MYSELF...
...BEFORE ADOPTION BY THE HASEGAWA FAMILY.


TAKE ME BEYOND THE THIRD BRIDGE UP-STREAM IN THE RIVER.
YES, MASTER.
HONJO IS A TOWN WHERE HIS SOUL STILL RESIDES.


HEIZO PASSES BY THE MANSION OF THE HASEGAWA FAMILY ON A HIRED BOAT. HERE HEIZO WAS BORN AS AN ILLEGITIMATE BOY 43 YEARS AGO.
HIS FATHER NOBUO WAS THE YOUNGEST OF THE THREE SONS OF THE FIFTH GENERATION HEAD OF THE 400-KOKU STRONG HATAMOTO FAMILY.
DO YOU WANT TO DROP OFF HERE?
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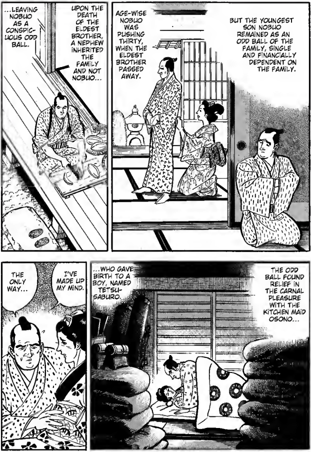
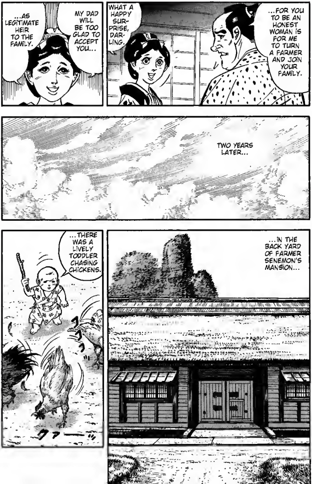
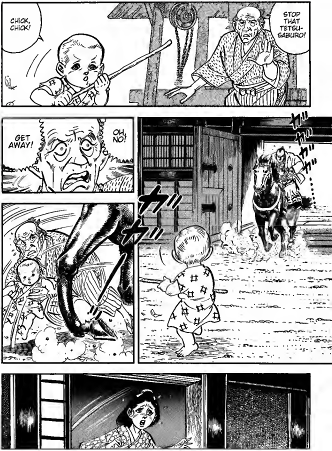
NO, NOT YET.
TAKE THE SIDE STREAM TOWARD THE HO-ONJI BRIDGE.
THE ELDEST BROTHER IHEI TOOK OVER THE FAMILY. THE SECOND ELDEST WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE ADOPTED AS HEIR TO ANOTHER HATAMOTO FAMILY.


BUT THE YOUNGEST SON NOBUO REMAINED AS AN ODD BALL OF THE FAMILY, SINGLE AND FINANCIALLY DEPENDENT ON THE FAMILY.
AGE-WISE NOBUO WAS PUSHING THIRTY, WHEN THE ELDEST BROTHER PASSED AWAY.
UPON THE DEATH OF THE ELDEST BROTHER, A NEPHEW INHERITED THE FAMILY AND NOT NOBUO...
...LEAVING NOBUO AS A CONSPICUOUS ODD BALL.
THE ODD BALL FOUND RELIEF IN THE CARNAL PLEASURE WITH THE KITCHEN MAID OSONO...
...WHO GAVE BIRTH TO A BOY, NAMED TETSUSABURO.
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND.
THE ONLY WAY...


...FOR YOU TO BE AN HONEST WOMAN IS FOR ME TO TURN A FARMER AND JOIN YOUR FAMILY.
WHAT A HAPPY SURPRISE, DARLING.
MY DAD WILL BE TOO GLAD TO ACCEPT YOU...
...AS LEGITIMATE HEIR TO THE FAMILY.
TWO YEARS LATER...
...IN THE BACK YARD OF FARMER SENEMON'S MANSION...
...THERE WAS A LIVELY TODDLER CHASING CHICKENS.


STOP THAT TETSU-SABURO!
CHICK, CHICK!
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OH, NO!
GET AWAY!
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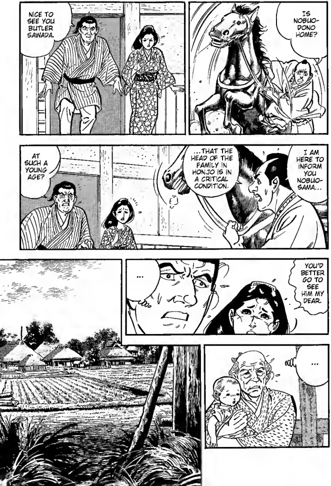
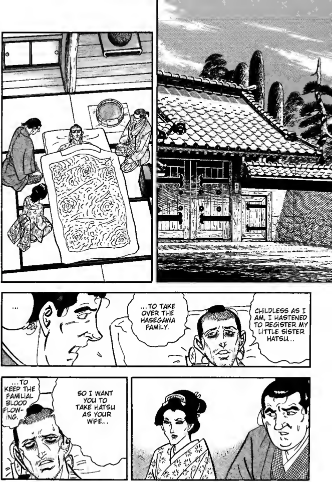
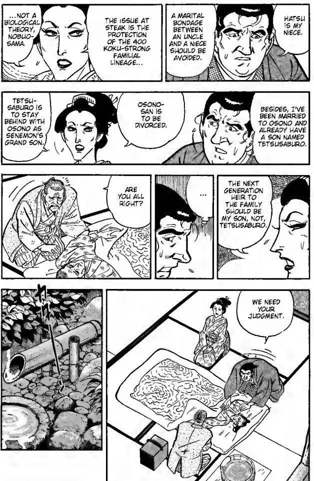
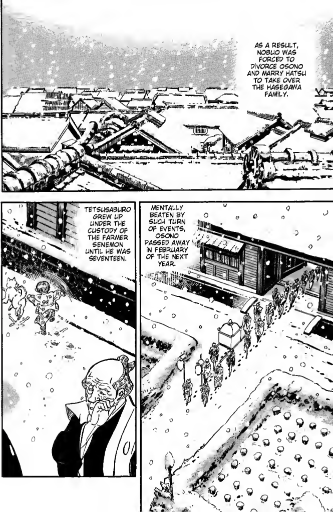
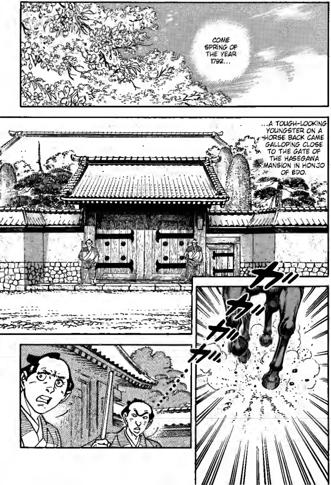

IS NOBUO-DONO HOME?
NICE TO SEE YOU BUTLER SAWADA.
I AM HERE TO INFORM YOU NOBUO-SAMA...
...THAT THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY IN HONJO IS IN A CRITICAL CONDITION.
AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE?
YOU'D BETTER GO TO SEE HIM MY DEAR.
...
...


CHILDLESS AS I AM, I HASTENED TO REGISTER MY LITTLE SISTER HATSU...
...TO TAKE OVER THE HASEGAWA FAMILY.
...
SO I WANT YOU TO TAKE HATSU AS YOUR WIFE...
...TO KEEP THE FAMILIAL BLOOD FLOWING.


HATSU IS MY NIECE.
A MARITAL BONDAGE BETWEEN AN UNCLE AND A NIECE SHOULD BE AVOIDED.
THE ISSUE AT STEAK IS THE PROTECTION OF THE 400 KOKU-STRONG FAMILIAL LINEAGE...
...NOT A BIOLOGICAL THEORY, NOBUO-SAMA.
BESIDES, I'VE BEEN MARRIED TO OSONO AND ALREADY HAVE A SON NAMED TETSUSABURO.
OSONO-SAN IS TO BE DIVORCED.
TETSUSABURO IS TO STAY BEHIND WITH OSONO AS SENEMON'S GRAND SON.
THE NEXT GENERATION HEIR TO THE FAMILY SHOULD BE MY SON, NOT, TETSUSABURO.
...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
WE NEED YOUR JUDGMENT.


AS A RESULT, NOBUO WAS FORCED TO DIVORCE OSONO AND MARRY HATSU TO TAKE OVER THE HASEGAWA FAMILY.
MENTALLY BEATEN BY SUCH TURN OF EVENTS, OSONO PASSED AWAY IN FEBRUARY OF THE NEXT YEAR.
TETSUSABURO GREW UP UNDER THE CUSTODY OF THE FARMER SENEMON UNTIL HE WAS SEVENTEEN.


COME SPRING OF THE YEAR 1792…
…A TOUGH-LOOKING YOUNGSTER ON A HORSE BACK CAME GALLOPING CLOSE TO THE GATE OF THE HASEGAWA MANSION IN HONJO OF EDO.
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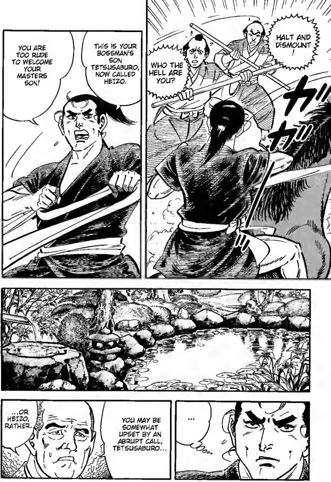
HALT AND DISMOUNT!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
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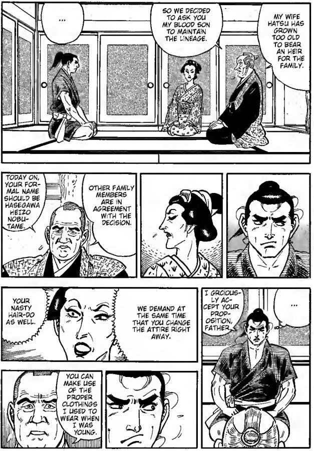
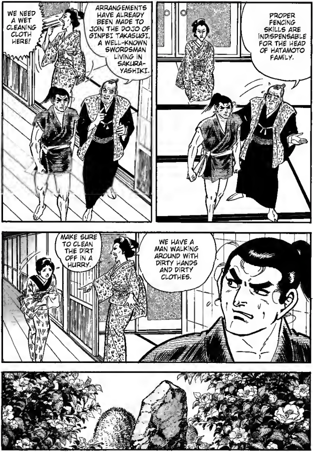
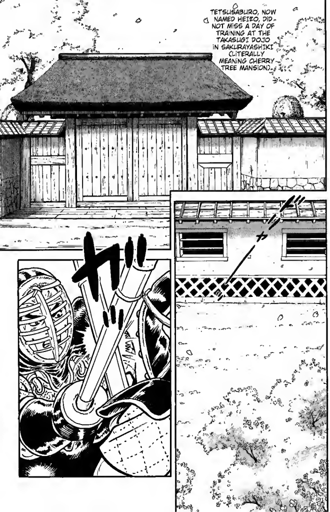
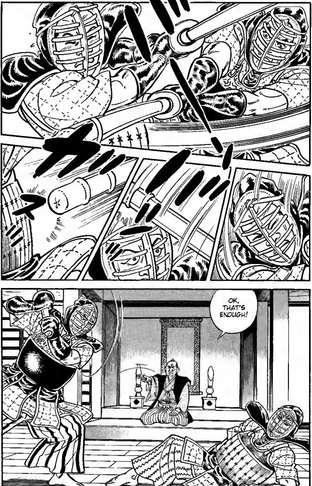
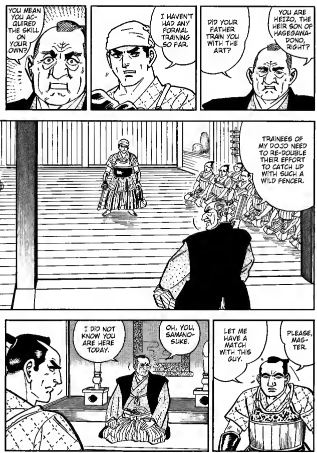
THIS IS YOUR BOSSMAN'S SON TETSUSABURO, NOW CALLED HEIZO.
YOU ARE TOO RUDE TO WELCOME YOUR MASTERS SON!
...
YOU MAY BE SOMEWHAT UPSET BY AN ABRUPT CALL, TETSUSABURO...
...OR HEIZO, RATHER.

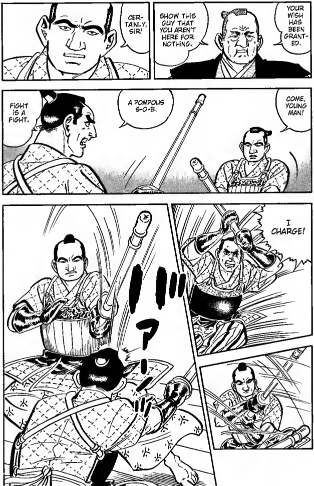

MY WIFE HATSU HAS GROWN TOO OLD TO BEAR AN HEIR FOR THE FAMILY.
SO WE DECIDED TO ASK YOU MY BLOOD SON TO MAINTAIN THE LINEAGE.
...
TODAY ON, YOUR FORMAL NAME SHOULD BE HASEGAWA HEIZO NOBUTAME.
OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE DECISION.
WE DEMAND AT THE SAME TIME THAT YOU CHANGE THE ATTIRE RIGHT AWAY.
YOUR NASTY HAIR-DO AS WELL.
YOU CAN MAKE USE OF THE PROPER CLOTHINGS I USED TO WEAR WHEN I WAS YOUNG.
...
I GRCIOUSLY ACCEPT YOUR PROPOSITION, FATHER.


WE NEED A WET CLEANING CLOTH HERE!
ARRANGEMENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE TO JOIN THE DOJO OF GINPEI TAKASUGI, A WELL-KNOWN SWORDSMAN LIVING IN SAKURA-YASHIKI.
PROPER FENCING SKILLS ARE INDISPENSABLE FOR THE HEAD OF HATAMOTO FAMILY.
MAKE SURE TO CLEAN THE DIRT OFF IN A HURRY.
WE HAVE A MAN WALKING AROUND WITH DIRTY HANDS AND DIRTY CLOTHES.


TETSUSABURO, NOW NAMED HEIZO, DID NOT MISS A DAY OF TRAINING AT THE TAKASUGI DOJO IN SAKURAYASHIKI (LITERALLY MEANING CHERRY TREE MANSION).


OK, THAT'S ENOUGH!


YOU ARE HEIZO, THE HEIR SON OF HASEGAWA-DONO, RIGHT?
DID YOUR FATHER TRAIN YOU WITH THE ART?
I HAVEN'T HAD ANY FORMAL TRAINING SO FAR.
YOU MEAN YOU ACQUIRED THE SKILL ON YOUR OWN?
TRAINEES OF MY DOJO NEED TO RE-DOUBLE THEIR EFFORT TO CATCH UP WITH SUCH A WILD FENCER.
PLEASE, MASTER.
LET ME HAVE A MATCH WITH THIS GUY.
OH, YOU, SAMANOSUKE.
I DID NOT KNOW YOU ARE HERE TODAY.


YOUR WISH HAS BEEN GRANTED.
SHOW THIS GUY THAT YOU AREN'T HERE FOR NOTHING.
CERTAINLY, SIR!
COME, YOUNG MAN!
A POMPOUS S-O-B.
FIGHT IS A FIGHT.
I CHARGE!
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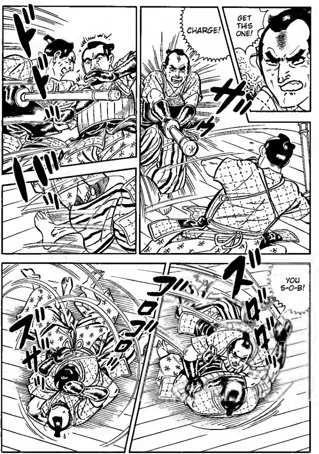
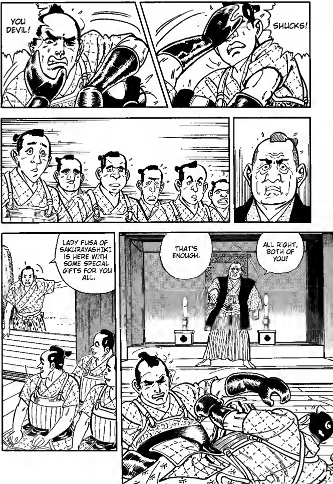
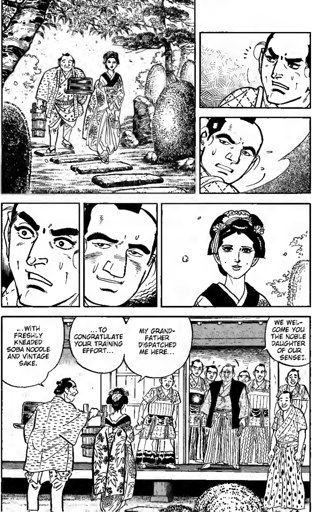
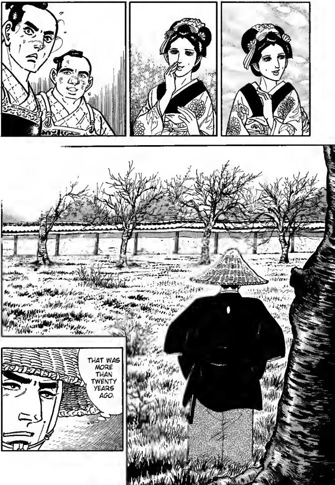
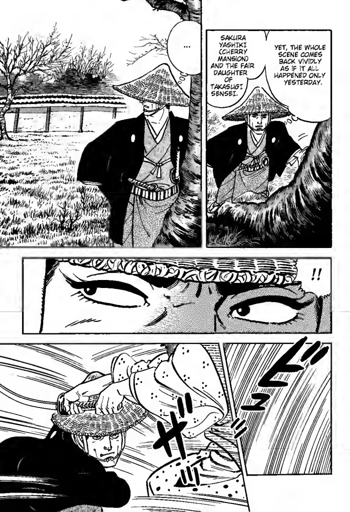

GET THIS ONE!
CHARGE!
YOU S-O-B!


SHUCKS!
YOU DEVIL!
ALL RIGHT, BOTH OF YOU!
THAT'S ENOUGH.
LADY FUSA OF SAKURAYASHIKI IS HERE WITH SOME SPECIAL GIFTS FOR YOU ALL.


WE WELCOME YOU THE NOBLE DAUGHTER OF OUR SENSEI.
MY GRANDFATHER DISPATCHED ME HERE...
...TO CONGRATULATE YOUR TRAINING EFFORT...
...WITH FRESHLY KNEADED SOBA NOODLE AND VINTAGE SAKE.


THAT WAS MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS AGO.


...
SAKURA YASHIKI (CHERRY MANSION) AND THE FAIR DAUGHTER OF TAKASUGI SENSEI.
YET, THE WHOLE SCENE COMES BACK VIVIDLY AS IF IT ALL HAPPENED ONLY YESTERDAY.
!!
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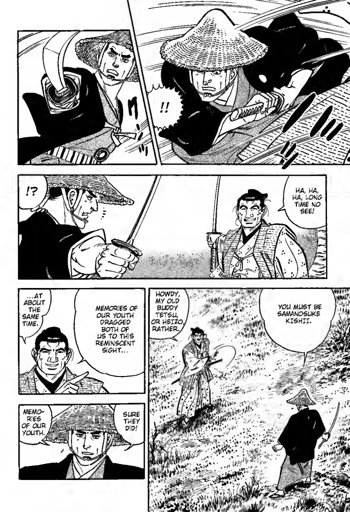
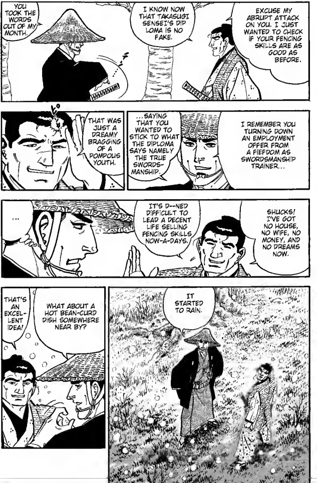
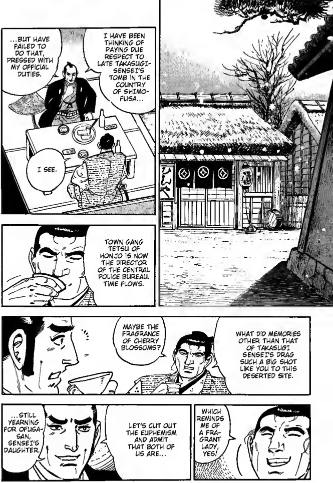
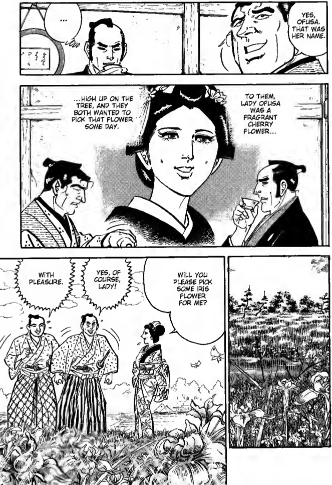
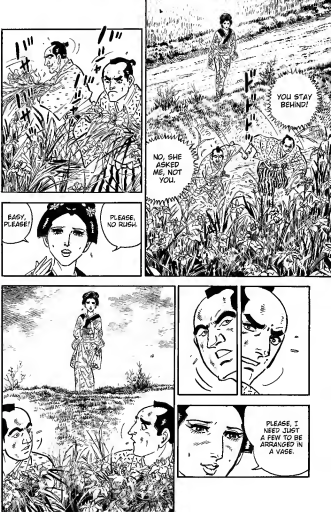

!!
!?
HA, HA, HA, LONG TIME NO SEE!
...AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME.
MEMORIES OF OUR YOUTH DRAGGED BOTH OF US TO THIS REMINSCENT SIGHT...
MEMORIES OF OUR YOUTH.
SURE THEY DID!
HOWDY, MY OLD BUDDY TETSU, OR HEIZO, RATHER.
YOU MUST BE SAMANOSUKE KISHII.


EXCUSE MY ABRUPT ATTACK ON YOU. I JUST WANTED TO CHECK IF YOUR FENCING SKILLS ARE AS GOOD AS BEFORE.
I KNOW NOW THAT TAKASUGI SENSEI'S DIPLOMA IS NO FAKE.
YOU TOOK THE WORDS OUT OF MY MONTH.
I REMEMBER YOU TURNING DOWN AN EMPLOYMENT OFFER FROM A FIEFDOM AS SWORDSMANSHIP TRAINER...
...SAYING THAT YOU WANTED TO STICK TO WHAT THE DIPLOMA SAYS NAMELY THE TRUE SWORDSMANSHIP.
THAT WAS JUST A DREAMY BRAGGING OF A POMPOUS YOUTH.
SHUCKS! I'VE GOT NO HOUSE, NO WIFE, NO MONEY, AND NO DREAMS NOW.
IT'S D--NED DIFFICULT TO LEAD A DECENT LIFE SELLING FENCING SKILLS NOW-A-DAYS.
...
IT STARTED TO RAIN.
WHAT ABOUT A HOT BEAN-CURD DISH SOMEWHERE NEAR BY?
THAT'S AN EXCELLENT IDEA!


I HAVE BEEN THINKING OF PAYING DUE RESPECT TO LATE TAKASUGI-SENSEI'S TOMB IN THE COUNTRY OF SHIMOFUSA...
...BUT HAVE FAILED TO DO THAT, PRESSED WITH MY OFFICIAL DUTIES.
I SEE.
TOWN GANG TETSU OF HONJO IS NOW THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL POLICE BUREAU. TIME FLOWS.
WHAT DID MEMORIES OTHER THAN THAT OF TAKASUGI SENSEI'S DRAG SUCH A BIG SHOT LIKE YOU TO THIS DESERTED SITE.
MAYBE THE FRAGRANCE OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS?
WHICH REMINDS ME OF A FRAGRANT LADY, YES!
LET'S CUT OUT THE EUPHEMISM AND ADMIT THAT BOTH OF US ARE...
...STILL YEARNING FOR OFUSA-SAN, SENSEI'S DAUGHTER.


YES, OFUSA. THAT WAS HER NAME.
...
TO THEM, LADY OFUSA WAS A FRAGRANT CHERRY FLOWER...
...HIGH UP ON THE TREE, AND THEY BOTH WANTED TO PICK THAT FLOWER SOME DAY.
WILL YOU PLEASE PICK SOME IRIS FLOWER FOR ME?
YES, OF COURSE, LADY!
WITH PLEASURE.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YOU STAY BEHIND!
NO, SHE ASKED ME, NOT YOU.
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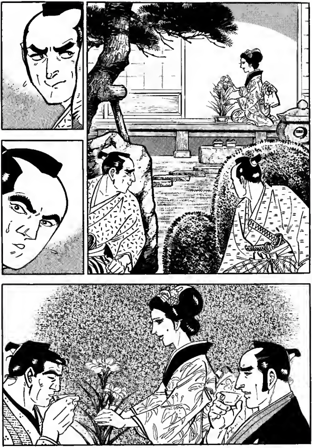
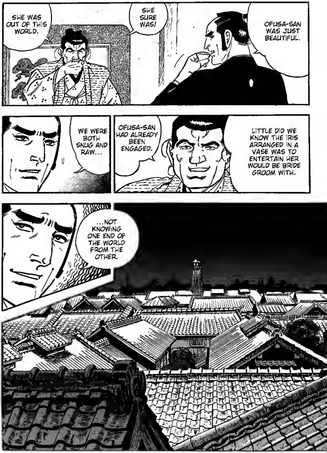
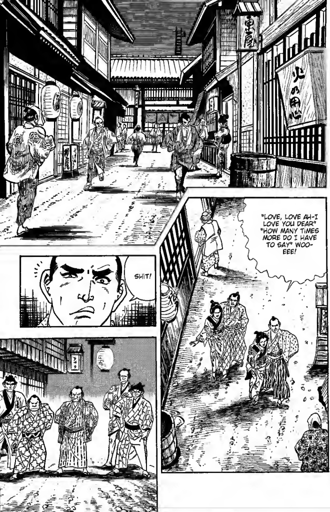
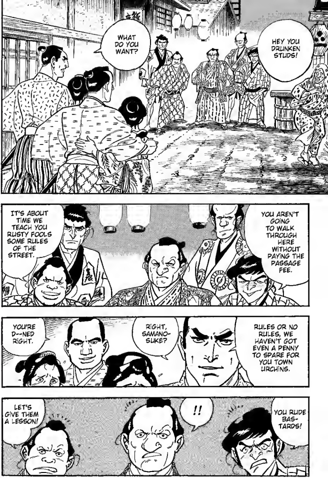
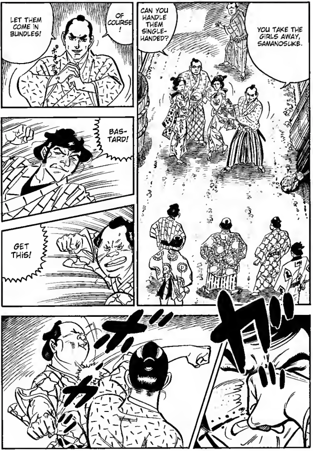
PLEASE, NO RUSH.
EASY, PLEASE!
PLEASE, I NEED JUST A FEW TO BE ARRANGED IN A VASE.

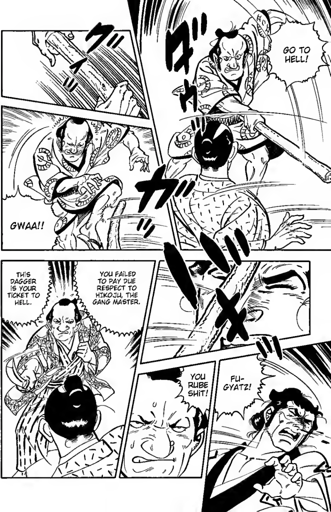


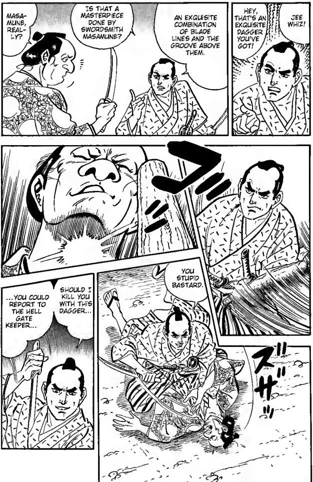

OFUSA-SAN WAS JUST BEAUTIFUL.
SHE SURE WAS!
SHE WAS OUT OF THIS WORLD.
LITTLE DID WE KNOW THE IRIS ARRANGED IN A VASE WAS TO ENTERTAIN HER WOULD BE BRIDE GROOM WITH.
OFUSA-SAN HAD ALREADY BEEN ENGAGED.
WE WERE BOTH SNUG AND RAW...
...NOT KNOWING ONE END OF THE WORLD FROM THE OTHER.

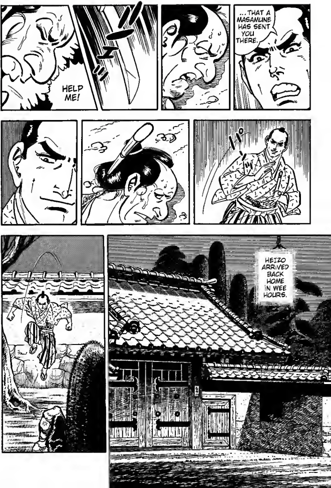

火の用心
"LOVE, LOVE AH-I LOVE YOU DEAR" "HOW MANY TIMES MORE DO I HAVE TO SAY" WOO-EEE!
SHIT!

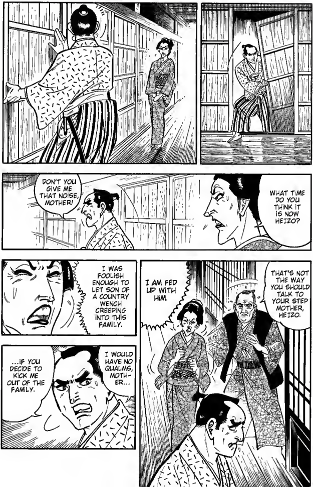

HEY YOU DRUNKEN STUDS!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
YOU AREN'T GOING TO WALK THROUGH HERE WITHOUT PAYING THE PASSAGE FEE.
IT'S ABOUT TIME WE TEACH YOU RUSTY FOOLS SOME RULES OF THE STREET.
RULES OR NO RULES, WE HAVEN'T GOT EVEN A PENNY TO SPARE FOR YOU TOWN URCHINS.
RIGHT, SAMANOSUKE?
YOU'RE D--NED RIGHT.
YOU RUDE BASTARDS!
!!
LET'S GIVE THEM A LESSON!

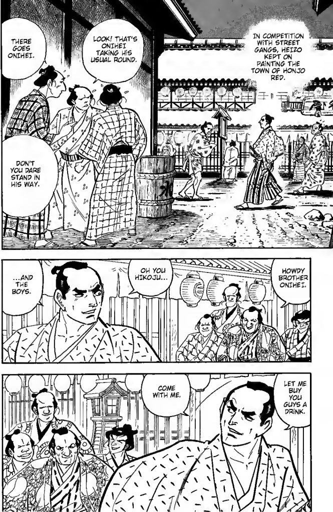

YOU TAKE THE GIRLS AWAY, SAMANOSUKE.
CAN YOU HANDLE THEM SINGLE-HANDED?
OF COURSE!
LET THEM COME IN BUNDLES!
ポキポキッ
BASTARD!
GET THIS!
ボカッ

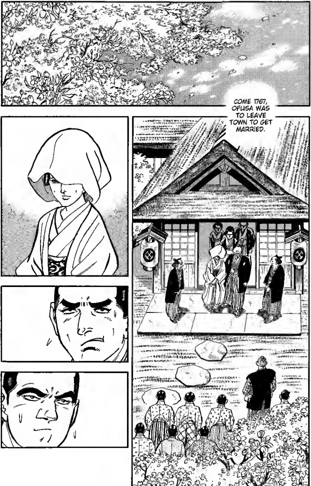

GO TO HELL!
GWAA!!
YOU FAILED TO PAY DUE RESPECT TO HIKOJU, THE GANG MASTER.
THIS DAGGER IS YOUR TICKET TO HELL.
FU-GYATZ!
YOU RUBE SHIT!

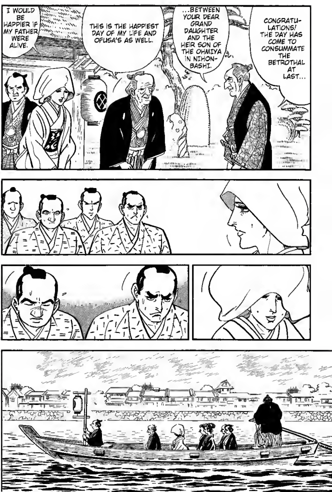

JEE WHIZ!
HEY, THAT'S AN EXQUISITE DAGGER YOU'VE GOT!
AN EXQUISITE COMBINATION OF BLADE LINES AND THE GROOVE ABOVE THEM.
IS THAT A MASTERPIECE DONE BY SWORDSMITH MASAMUNE?
MASAMUNE, REALLY?
ズザッ
YOU STUPID BASTARD.
SHOULD I KILL YOU WITH THIS DAGGER...
...YOU COULD REPORT TO THE HELL GATE KEEPER...

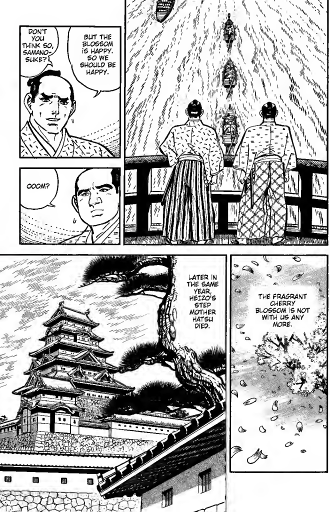

...THAT A MASAMUNE HAS SENT YOU THERE.
HELP ME!
HEIZO ARRIVED BACK HOME IN WEE HOURS.

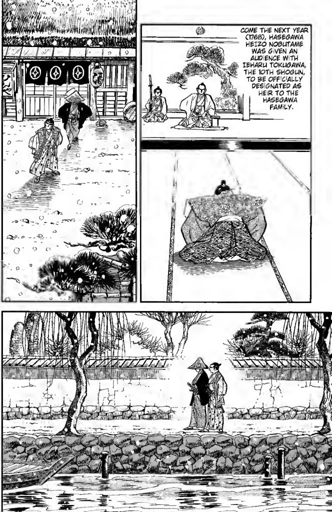

WHAT TIME DO YOU THINK IT IS NOW HEIZO?
DON'T YOU GIVE ME THAT NOISE, MOTHER!
THAT'S NOT THE WAY YOU SHOULD TALK TO YOUR STEP MOTHER, HEIZO.
I AM FED UP WITH HIM.
I WAS FOOLISH ENOUGH TO LET SON OF A COUNTRY WENCH CREEPING INTO THIS FAMILY.
I WOULD HAVE NO QUALMS, MOTHER...
...IF YOU DECIDE TO KICK ME OUT OF THE FAMILY.

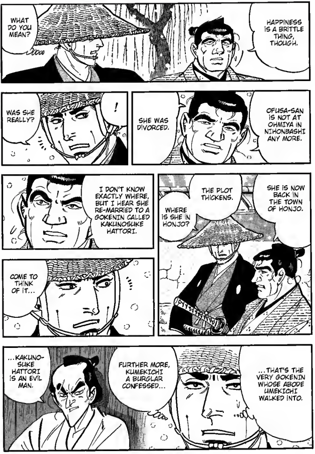

THERE GOES ONIHEI.
LOOK! THAT'S ONIHEI TAKING HIS USUAL ROUND.
IN COMPETITION WITH STREET GANGS, HEIZO KEPT ON PAINTING THE TOWN OF HONJO RED.
DON'T YOU DARE STAND IN HIS WAY.
HOWDY BROTHER ONIHEI.
OH YOU HIKOJU...
...AND THE BOYS.
COME WITH ME.
LET ME BUY YOU GUYS A DRINK.

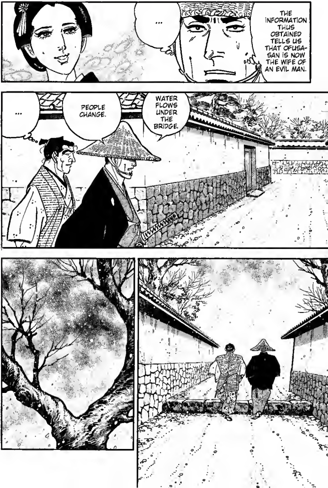

COME 1767, OFUSA WAS TO LEAVE TOWN TO GET MARRIED.

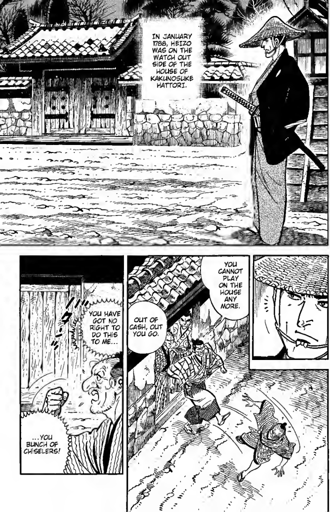

CONGRATULATIONS! THE DAY HAS COME TO CONSUMMATE THE BETROTHAL AT LAST...
...BETWEEN YOUR DEAR GRAND DAUGHTER AND THE HEIR SON OF THE OHMIYA IN NIHONBASHI.
THIS IS THE HAPPIEST DAY OF MY LIFE AND OFUSA'S AS WELL.
I WOULD BE HAPPIER IF MY FATHER WERE ALIVE.

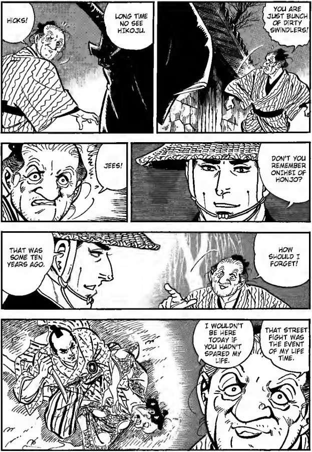

BUT THE BLOSSOM IS HAPPY. SO WE SHOULD BE HAPPY.
DON'T YOU THINK SO, SAMANOSUKE?
OOOM?
LATER IN THE SAME YEAR, HEIZO'S STEP MOTHER HATSU DIED.
THE FRAGRANT CHERRY BLOSSOM IS NOT WITH US ANY MORE.

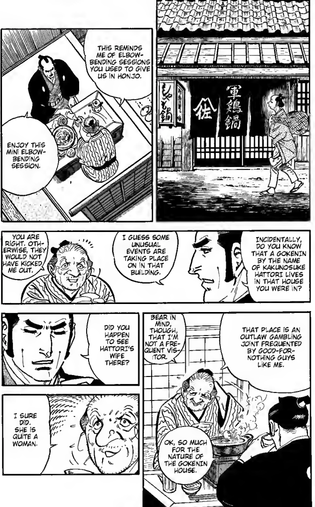

COME THE NEXT YEAR (1768), HASEGAWA HEIZO NOBUTAME WAS GIVEN AN AUDIENCE WITH IEHARU TOKUGAWA, THE 10TH SHOGUN, TO BE OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED AS HEIR TO THE HASEGAWA FAMILY.

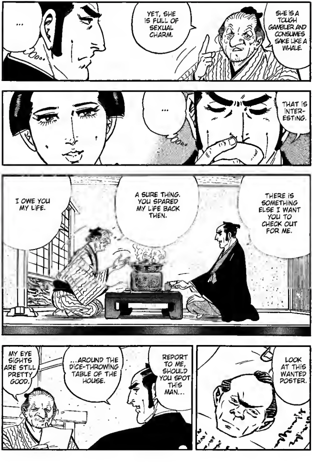

HAPPINESS IS A BRITTLE THING, THOUGH.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
OFUSA-SAN IS NOT AT OHMIYA IN NIHONBASHI ANY MORE.
SHE WAS DIVORCED.
!
WAS SHE REALLY?
SHE IS NOW BACK IN THE TOWN OF HONJO.
THE PLOT THICKENS.
WHERE IS SHE IN HONJO?
I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE, BUT I HEAR SHE RE-MARRIED TO A GOKENIN CALLED KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI.
COME TO THINK OF IT...
...THAT'S THE VERY GOKENIN WHOSE ABODE UMEKICHI WALKED INTO.
FURTHER MORE, KUMEKICHI A BURGLAR CONFESSED...
...KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI IS AN EVIL MAN.

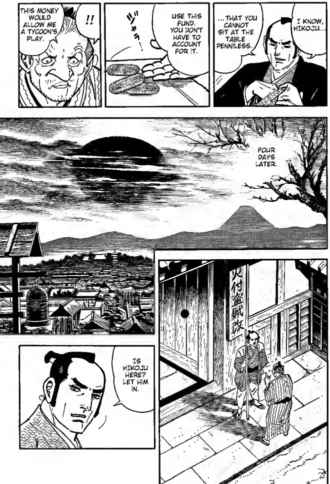

...
THE INFORMATION THUS OBTAINED TELLS US THAT OFUSA-SAN IS NOW THE WIFE OF AN EVIL MAN.
...
PEOPLE CHANGE.
WATER FLOWS UNDER THE BRIDGE.

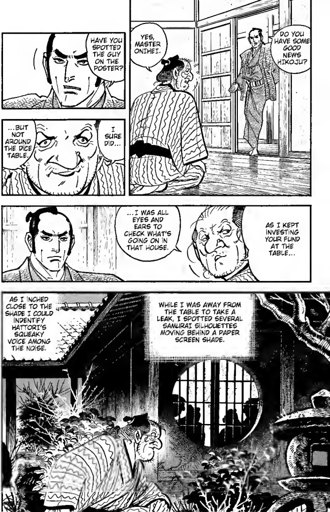

IN JANUARY 1788, HEIZO WAS ON THE WATCH OUT SIDE OF THE HOUSE OF KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI.
YOU CANNOT PLAY ON THE HOUSE ANY MORE.
OUT OF CASH, OUT YOU GO.
YOU HAVE GOT NO RIGHT TO DO THIS TO ME...
...YOU BUNCH OF CHISELERS!

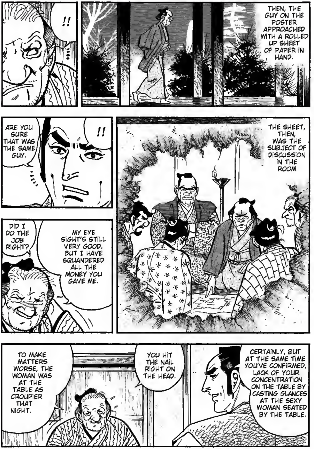

HICKS!
LONG TIME NO SEE HIKOJU.
YOU ARE JUST BUNCH OF DIRTY SWINDLERS!
JEES!
DON'T YOU REMEMBER ONIHEI OF HONJO?
THAT WAS SOME TEN YEARS AGO.
HOW SHOULD I FORGET!
I WOULDN'T BE HERE TODAY IF YOU HADN'T SPARED MY LIFE.
THAT STREET FIGHT WAS THE EVENT OF MY LIFE TIME.

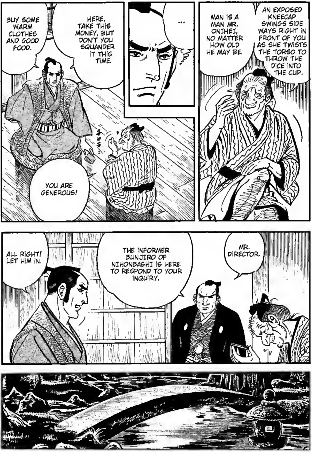

しゃも鍋
軍鶏鍋
佐
THIS REMINDS ME OF ELBOW-BENDING SESSIONS YOU USED TO GIVE US IN HONJO.
ENJOY THIS MINI ELBOW-BENDING SESSION.
INCIDENTALLY, DO YOU KNOW THAT A GOKENIN BY THE NAME OF KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI LIVES IN THAT HOUSE YOU WERE IN?
I GUESS SOME UNUSUAL EVENTS ARE TAKING PLACE ON IN THAT BUILDING.
YOU ARE RIGHT. OTHERWISE, THEY WOULD NOT HAVE KICKED ME OUT.
THAT PLACE IS AN OUTLAW GAMBLING JOINT FREQUENTED BY GOOD-FOR-NOTHING GUYS LIKE ME.
BEAR IN MIND, THOUGH, THAT I'M NOT A FREQUENT VISITOR.
OK, SO MUCH FOR THE NATURE OF THE GOKENIN HOUSE.
DID YOU HAPPEN TO SEE HATTORI'S WIFE THERE?
I SURE DID. SHE IS QUITE A WOMAN.

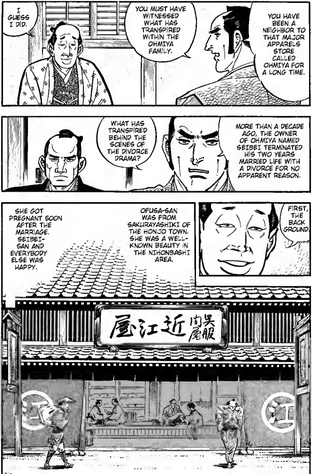

SHE IS A TOUGH GAMBLER AND CONSUMES SAKE LIKE A WHALE.
YET, SHE IS FULL OF SEXUAL CHARM.
...
THAT IS INTERESTING.
...
THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE I WANT YOU TO CHECK OUT FOR ME.
A SURE THING. YOU SPARED MY LIFE BACK THEN.
I OWE YOU MY LIFE.
LOOK AT THIS WANTED POSTER.
REPORT TO ME, SHOULD YOU SPOT THIS MAN...
...AROUND THE DICE-THROWING TABLE OF THE HOUSE.
MY EYE SIGHTS ARE STILL PRETTY GOOD.

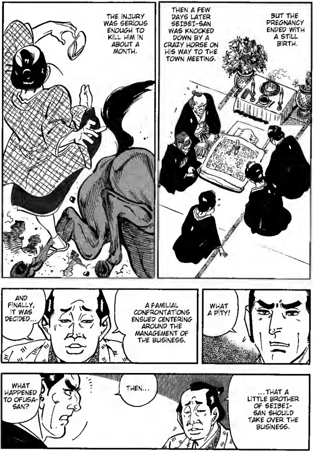

I KNOW, HIKOJU...
...THAT YOU CANNOT SIT AT THE TABLE PENNILESS.
USE THIS FUND. YOU DON'T HAVE TO ACCOUNT FOR IT.
ジャラ...
!!
THIS MONEY WOULD ALLOW ME A TYCOON'S PLAY.
FOUR DAYS LATER.
火付盗賊改
IS HIKOJU HERE? LET HIM IN.

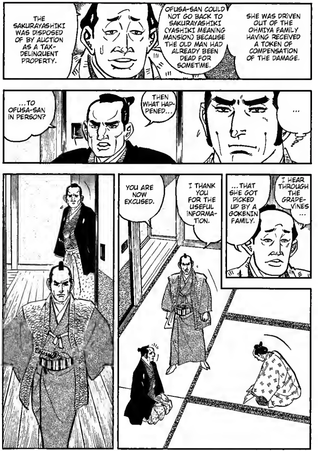

DO YOU HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS HIKOJU?
YES, MASTER ONIHEI.
HAVE YOU SPOTTED THE GUY ON THE POSTER?
I SURE DID...
...BUT NOT AROUND THE DICE TABLE.
AS I KEPT INVESTING YOUR FUND AT THE TABLE...
...I WAS ALL EYES AND EARS TO CHECK WHAT'S GOING ON IN THAT HOUSE.
WHILE I WAS AWAY FROM THE TABLE TO TAKE A LEAK, I SPOTTED SEVERAL SAMURAI SILHOUETTES MOVING BEHIND A PAPER SCREEN SHADE.
AS I INCHED CLOSE TO THE SHADE I COULD INDENTIFY HATTORI'S SQUEAKY VOICE AMONG THE NOISE.

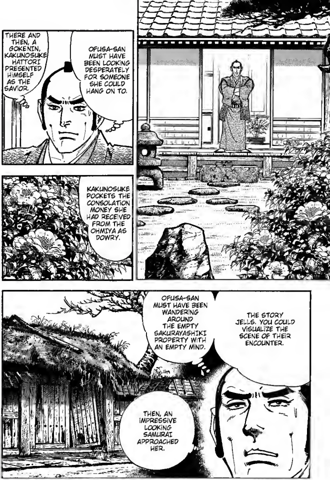

!!
THEN, THE GUY ON THE POSTER APPROACHED WITH A ROLLED UP SHEET OF PAPER IN HAND.
ARE YOU SURE THAT WAS THE SAME GUY.
!!
THE SHEET, THEN, WAS THE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION IN THE ROOM
DID I DO THE JOB RIGHT?
MY EYE SIGHT'S STILL VERY GOOD. BUT I HAVE SQUANDERED ALL THE MONEY YOU GAVE ME.
TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, THE WOMAN WAS AT THE TABLE AS CROUPIER THAT NIGHT.
YOU HIT THE NAIL RIGHT ON THE HEAD.
CERTAINLY, BUT AT THE SAME TIME YOU'VE CONFIRMED, LACK OF YOUR CONCENTRATION ON THE TABLE BY CASTING GLANCES AT THE SEXY WOMAN SEATED BY THE TABLE.

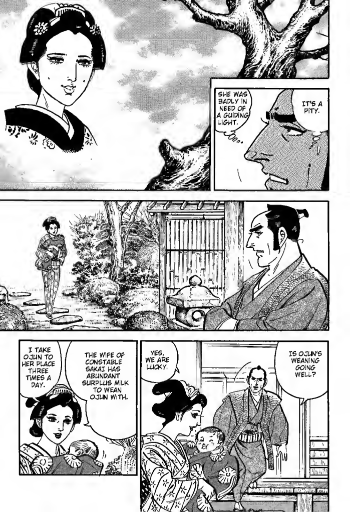

MAN IS A MAN MR. ONIHEI, NO MATTER HOW OLD HE MAY BE.
AN EXPOSED KNEECAP SWINGS SIDE WAYS RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU AS SHE TWISTS THE TORSO TO THROW THE DICE INTO THE CUP.
...
HERE, TAKE THIS MONEY, BUT DON'T YOU SQUANDER IT THIS TIME.
BUY SOME WARM CLOTHES AND GOOD FOOD.
チャラ…
YOU ARE GENEROUS!
MR. DIRECTOR.
THE INFORMER BUNJIRO OF NIHONBASHI IS HERE TO RESPOND TO YOUR INQUIRY.
ALL RIGHT! LET HIM IN.

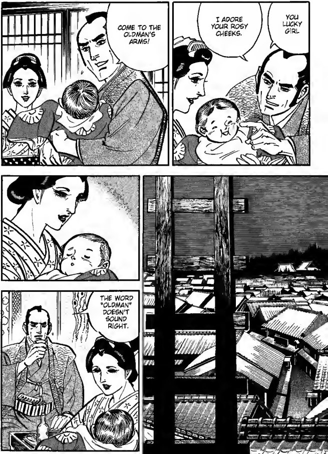

YOU HAVE BEEN A NEIGHBOR TO THAT MAJOR APPARELS STORE CALLED OHMIYA FOR A LONG TIME.
YOU MUST HAVE WITNESSED WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED WITHIN THE OHMIYA FAMILY.
I GUESS I DID.
MORE THAN A DECADE AGO, THE OWNER OF OHMIYA NAMED SEIBEI TERMINATED HIS TWO YEARS MARRIED LIFE WITH A DIVORCE FOR NO APPARENT REASON.
WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE DIVORCE DRAMA?
FIRST, THE BACK GROUND.
OFUSA-SAN WAS FROM SAKURAYASHIKI OF THE HONJO TOWN. SHE WAS A WELL-KNOWN BEAUTY IN THE NIHONBASHI AREA.
SHE GOT PREGNANT SOON AFTER THE MARRIAGE. SEIBEI-SAN AND EVERYBODY ELSE WAS HAPPY.
呉服問屋 近江屋

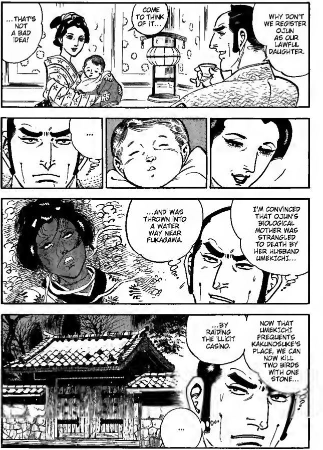

THEN A FEW DAYS LATER SEIBEI-SAN WAS KNOCKED DOWN BY A CRAZY HORSE ON HIS WAY TO THE TOWN MEETING.
THE INJURY WAS SERIOUS ENOUGH TO KILL HIM IN ABOUT A MONTH.
BUT THE PREGNANCY ENDED WITH A STILL BIRTH.
A FAMILIAL CONFRONTATIONS ENSUED CENTERING AROUND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BUSINESS.
AND FINALLY, IT WAS DECIDED...
...THAT A LITTLE BROTHER OF SEIBEI-SAN SHOULD TAKE OVER THE BUSINESS.
WHAT A PITY!
WHAT HAPPENED TO OFUSA-SAN?
THEN...

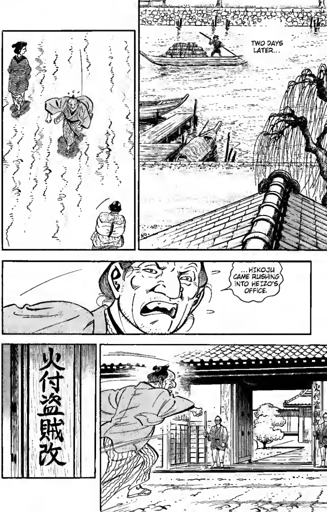

THE SAKURAYASHIKI WAS DISPOSED OF BY AUCTION AS A TAX-DELINQUENT PROPERTY.
OFUSA-SAN COULD NOT GO BACK TO SAKURAYASHIKI (YASHIKI MEANING MANSION) BECAUSE THE OLD MAN HAD ALREADY BEEN DEAD FOR SOMETIME.
SHE WAS DRIVEN OUT OF THE OHMIYA FAMILY HAVING RECEIVED A TOKEN OF COMPENSATION OF THE DAMAGE.
...TO OFUSA-SAN IN PERSON?
THEN WHAT HAPPENED...
...
I HEAR THROUGH THE GRAPEVINES...
...THAT SHE GOT PICKED UP BY A GOKENIN FAMILY.
I THANK YOU FOR THE USEFUL INFORMATION.
YOU ARE NOW EXCUSED.

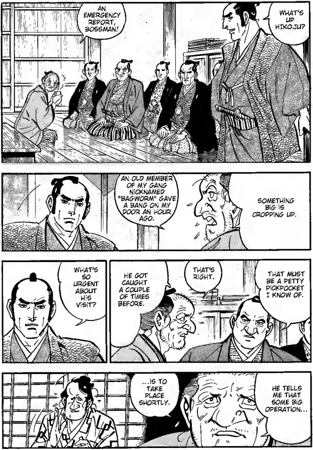

OFUSA-SAN MUST HAVE BEEN LOOKING DESPERATELY FOR SOMEONE SHE COULD HANG ON TO.
THERE AND THEN, A GOKENIN, KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI PRESENTED HIMSELF AS THE SAVIOR.
KAKUNOSUKE POCKETS THE CONSOLATION MONEY SHE HAD RECEIVED FROM THE OHMIYA AS DOWRY.
THE STORY JELLS. YOU COULD VISUALIZE THE SCENE OF THEIR ENCOUNTER.
OFUSA-SAN MUST HAVE BEEN WANDERING AROUND THE EMPTY SAKURAYASHIKI PROPERTY WITH AN EMPTY MIND.
THEN, AN IMPRESSIVE LOOKING SAMURAI APPROACHED HER.

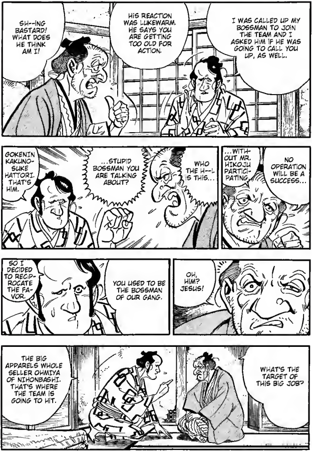

IT'S A PITY.
SHE WAS BADLY IN NEED OF A GUIDING LIGHT.
IS OJUN'S WEANING GOING WELL?
YES, WE ARE LUCKY.
THE WIFE OF CONSTABLE SAKAI HAS ABUNDANT SURPLUS MILK TO WEAN OJUN WITH.
I TAKE OJUN TO HER PLACE THREE TIMES A DAY.

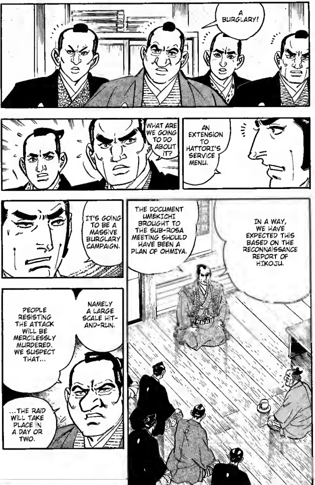

COME TO THE OLDMAN'S ARMS!
I ADORE YOUR ROSY CHEEKS.
YOU LUCKY GIRL
THE WORD "OLDMAN" DOESN'T SOUND RIGHT.

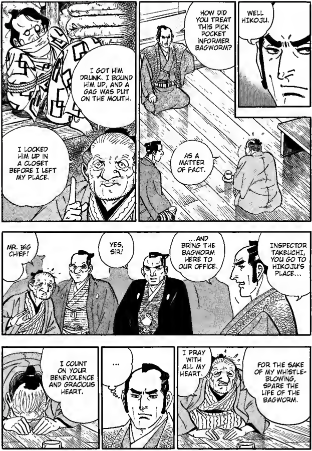

WHY DON'T WE REGISTER OJUN AS OUR LAWFUL DAUGHTER.
COME TO THINK OF IT...
...THAT'S NOT A BAD IDEA!
...
I'M CONVINCED THAT OJUN'S BIOLOGICAL MOTHER WAS STRANGLED TO DEATH BY HER HUSBAND UMEKICHI...
...AND WAS THROWN INTO A WATER WAY NEAR FUKAGAWA.
NOW THAT UMEKICHI FREQUENTS KAKUNOSUKE'S PLACE, WE CAN NOW KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE...
...BY RAIDING THE ILLICIT CASINO.
...

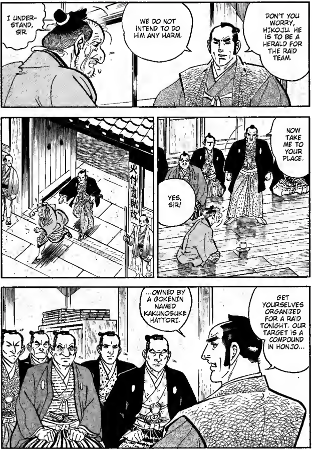

TWO DAYS LATER...
...HIKOJU CAME RUSHING INTO HEIZO'S OFFICE.
火付盗賊改

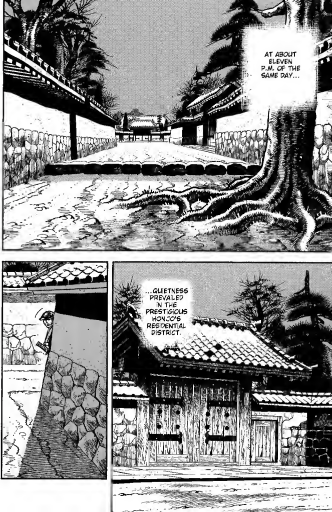

AN EMERGENCY REPORT, BOSSMAN!
WHAT'S UP HIKOJU?
SOMETHING BIG IS CROPPING UP.
AN OLD MEMBER OF MY GANG NICKNAMED "BAGWORM" GAVE A BANG ON MY DOOR AN HOUR AGO.
WHAT'S SO URGENT ABOUT HIS VISIT?
THAT MUST BE A PETTY PICKPOCKET I KNOW OF.
THAT'S RIGHT.
HE GOT CAUGHT A COUPLE OF TIMES BEFORE.
HE TELLS ME THAT SOME BIG OPERATION...
...IS TO TAKE PLACE SHORTLY.

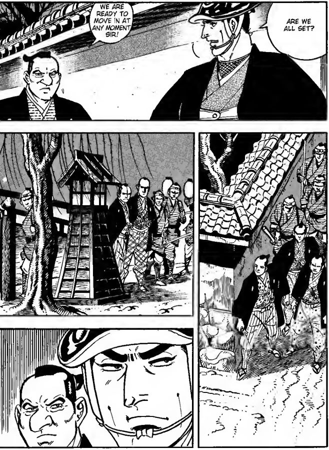

I WAS CALLED UP MY BOSSMAN TO JOIN THE TEAM AND I ASKED HIM IF HE WAS GOING TO CALL YOU UP, AS WELL.
HIS REACTION WAS LUKEWARM. HE SAYS YOU ARE GETTING TOO OLD FOR ACTION.
SH--ING BASTARD! WHAT DOES HE THINK AM I!
NO OPERATION WILL BE A SUCCESS...
...WITHOUT MR. HIKOJU PARTICIPATING.
WHO THE H--L IS THIS...
...STUPID BOSSMAN YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT?
GOKENIN KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI. THAT'S HIM.
OH, HIM? JESUS!
YOU USED TO BE THE BOSSMAN OF OUR GANG.
SO I DECIDED TO RECIPROCATE THE FAVOR.
WHAT'S THE TARGET OF THIS BIG JOB?
THE BIG APPARELS WHOLE SELLER OHMIYA OF NIHONBASHI. THAT'S WHERE THE TEAM IS GOING TO HIT.

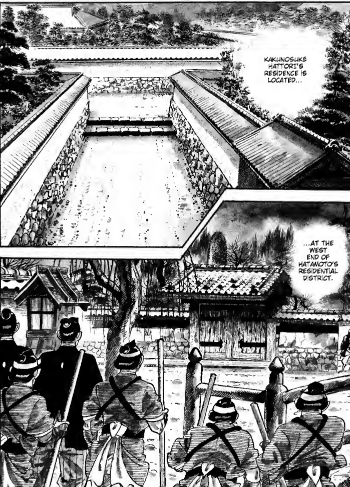

A BURGLARY!
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?
AN EXTENSION TO HATTORI'S SERVICE MENU.
IT'S GOING TO BE A MASSIVE BURGLARY CAMPAIGN.
NAMELY A LARGE SCALE HIT-AND-RUN.
PEOPLE RESISTING THE ATTACK WILL BE MERCILESSLY MURDERED. WE SUSPECT THAT...
...THE RAID WILL TAKE PLACE IN A DAY OR TWO.
THE DOCUMENT UMEKICHI BROUGHT TO THE SUB-ROSA MEETING SHOULD HAVE BEEN A PLAN OF OHMIYA.
IN A WAY, WE HAVE EXPECTED THIS BASED ON THE RECONNAISSANCE REPORT OF HIKOJU.

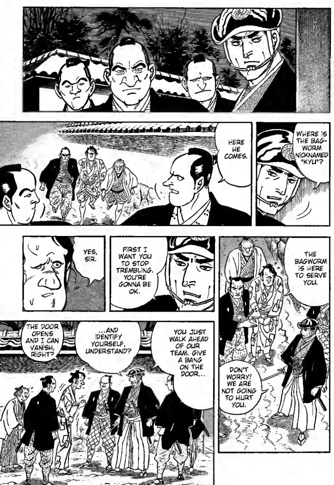

WELL HIKOJU.
HOW DID YOU TREAT THIS PICK POCKET INFORMER BAGWORM?
AS A MATTER OF FACT.
I GOT HIM DRUNK. I BOUND HIM UP, AND A GAG WAS PUT ON THE MOUTH.
I LOCKED HIM UP IN A CLOSET BEFORE I LEFT MY PLACE.
INSPECTOR TAKEUCHI, YOU GO TO HIKOJU'S PLACE...
...AND BRING THE BAGWORM HERE TO OUR OFFICE.
YES, SIR!
MR. BIG CHIEF!
FOR THE SAKE OF MY WHISTLE-BLOWING, SPARE THE LIFE OF THE BAGWORM.
I PRAY WITH ALL MY HEART.
...
I COUNT ON YOUR BENEVOLENCE AND GRACIOUS HEART.

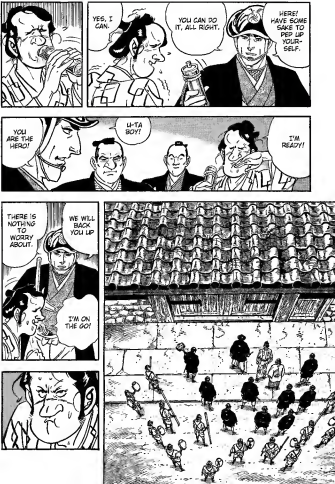

DON'T YOU WORRY, HIKOJU. HE IS TO BE A HERALD FOR THE RAID TEAM.
WE DO NOT INTEND TO DO HIM ANY HARM.
I UNDERSTAND, SIR.
NOW TAKE ME TO YOUR PLACE.
YES, SIR!
火付盗賊改
GET YOURSELVES ORGANIZED FOR A RAID TONIGHT. OUR TARGET IS A COMPOUND IN HONJO...
...OWNED BY A GOKENIN NAMED KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI.

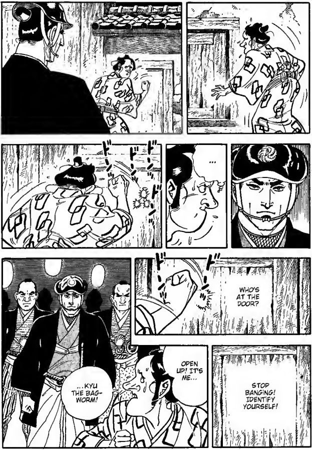

AT ABOUT ELEVEN P.M. OF THE SAME DAY...
...QUIETNESS PREVAILED IN THE PRESTIGIOUS HONJO'S RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT.


ARE WE ALL SET?
WE ARE READY TO MOVE IN AT ANY MOMENT SIR!


KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI'S RESIDENCE IS LOCATED...
...AT THE WEST END OF HATAMOTO'S RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT.


WHERE IS THE BAGWORM NICKNAMED "KYU"?
HERE HE COMES.
THE BAGWORM IS HERE TO SERVE YOU.
DON'T WORRY! WE ARE NOT GOING TO HURT YOU.
FIRST I WANT YOU TO STOP TREMBLING. YOU'RE GONNA BE OK.
YES, SIR.
YOU JUST WALK AHEAD OF OUR TEAM. GIVE A BANG ON THE DOOR...
...AND IDENTIFY YOURSELF, UNDERSTAND?
THE DOOR OPENS AND I CAN VANISH, RIGHT?


HERE! HAVE SOME SAKE TO PEP UP YOURSELF.
YOU CAN DO IT, ALL RIGHT.
YES, I CAN.
I'M READY!
U-TA BOY!
YOU ARE THE HERO!
WE WILL BACK YOU UP
THERE IS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
I'M ON THE GO!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...
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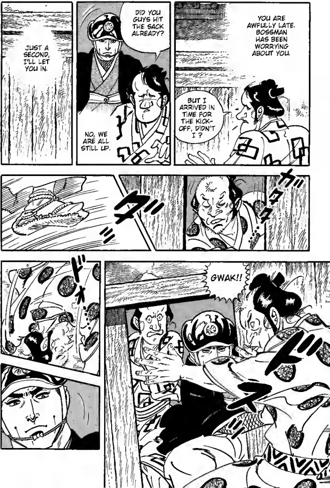
WHO'S AT THE DOOR?
OPEN UP! IT'S ME...
...KYU THE BAG-WORM!
STOP BANGING! IDENTIFY YOURSELF!


JUST A SECOND, I'LL LET YOU IN.
DID YOU GUYS HIT THE SACK ALREADY?
NO, WE ARE ALL STILL UP.
YOU ARE AWFULLY LATE. BOSSMAN HAS BEEN WORRYING ABOUT YOU.
BUT I ARRIVED IN TIME FOR THE KICK-OFF, DIDN'T I?
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GWAK!!
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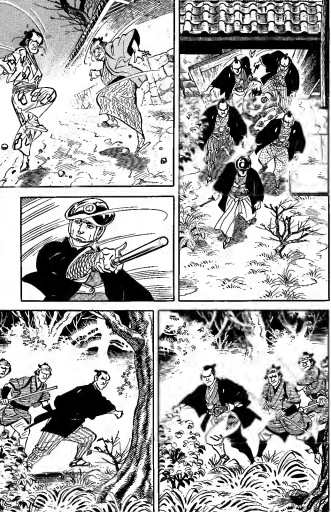
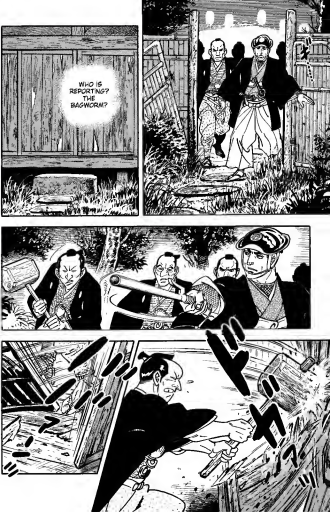
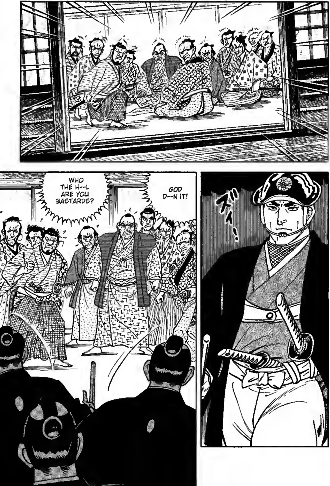
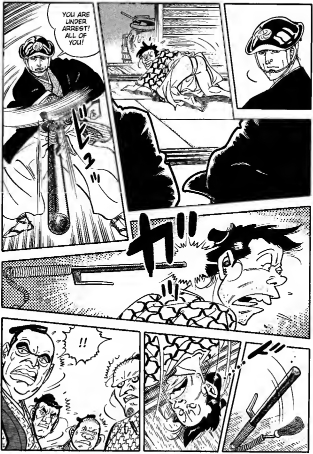



ギ……
WHO IS REPORTING? THE BAGWORM?
ドガッ


ズイ！
GOD D--N IT!
WHO THE H--L ARE YOU BASTARDS?


YOU ARE UNDER ARREST! ALL OF YOU!
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!!
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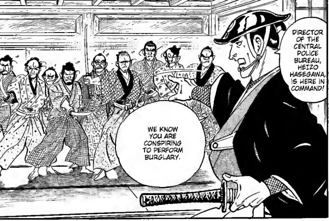
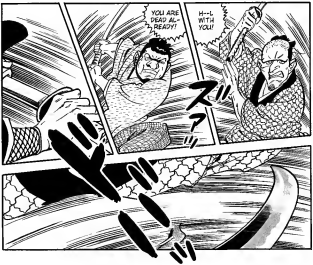
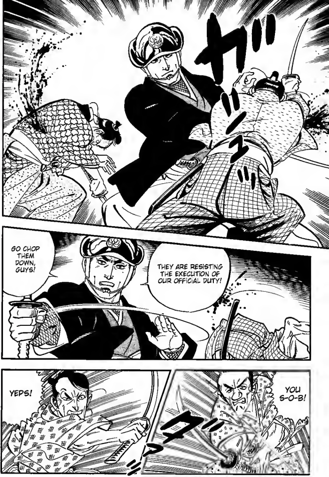

DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL POLICE BUREAU, HEIZO HASEGAWA, IS HERE IN COMMAND!
WE KNOW YOU ARE CONSPIRING TO PERFORM BURGLARY.


H--L WITH YOU!
YOU ARE DEAD ALREADY!
ズア
ドヅ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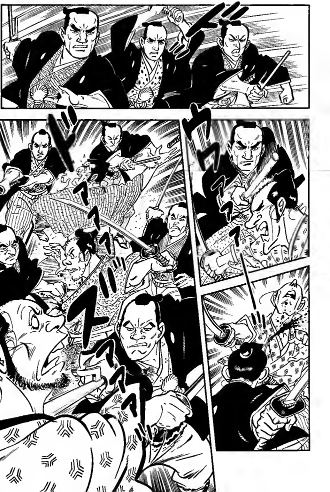
ジュ
THEY ARE RESISTING THE EXECUTION OF OUR OFFICIAL DUTY!
GO CHOP THEM DOWN, GUYS!
YOU S-O-B!
ダ
YEPS!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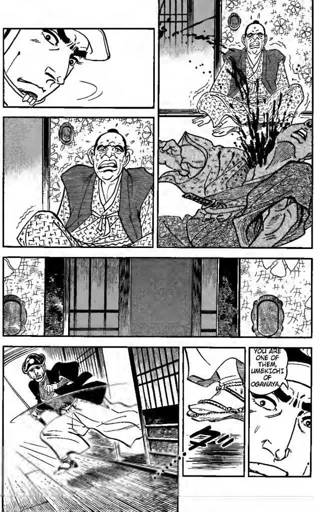
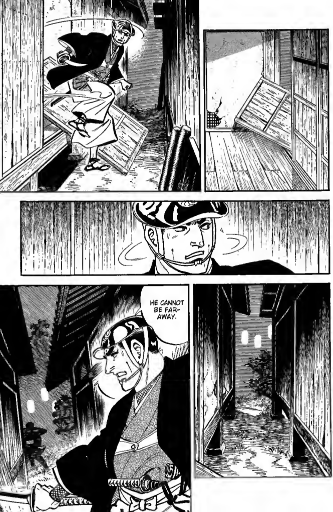
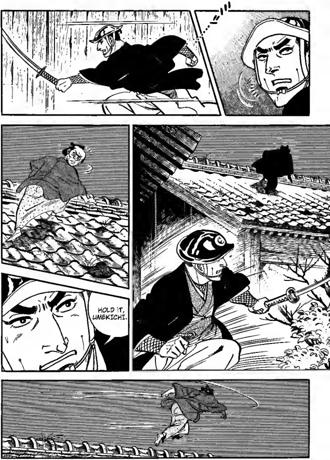
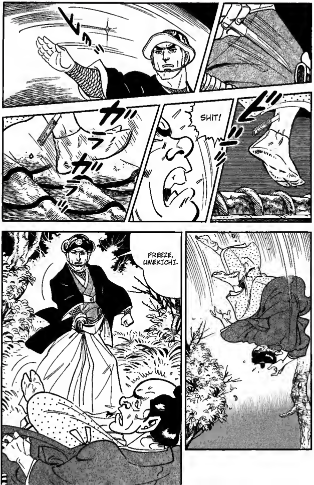
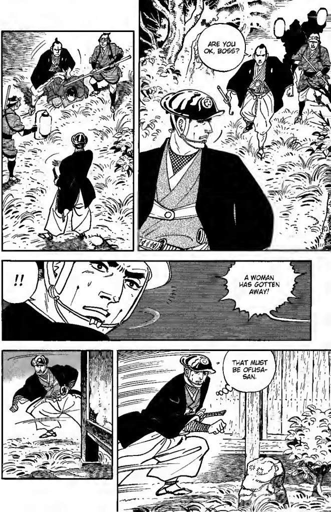
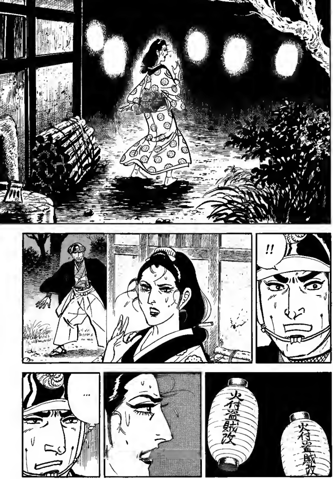

タッ
YOU ARE ONE OF THEM, UMEKICHI OF OGAWAYA.


HE CANNOT BE FAR-AWAY.


HOLD IT, UMEKICHI.


ヒョ゛
ビー゛
SHIT!
ガラ
ガラ゛
FREEZE, UMEKICHI.


ARE YOU OK, BOSS?
A WOMAN HAS GOTTEN AWAY!
!!
THAT MUST BE OFUSA-SAN.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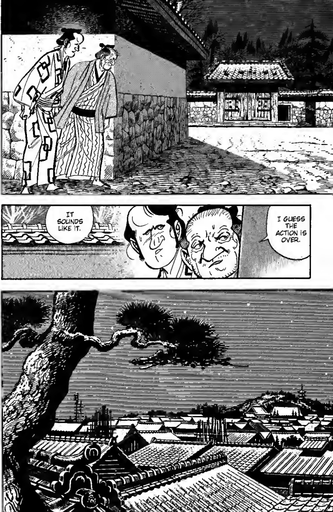
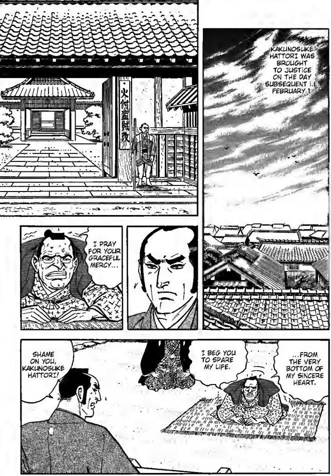
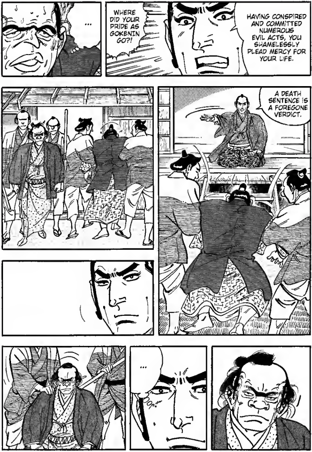
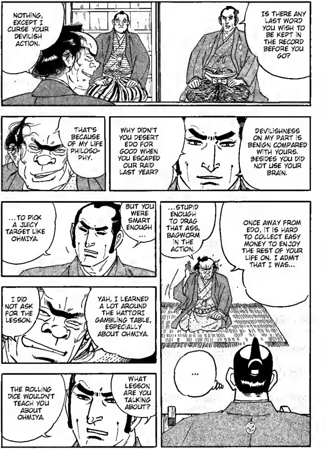
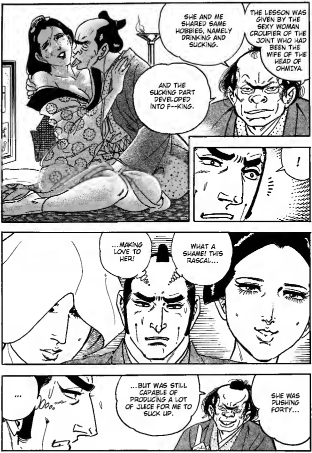
火付盗賊改
火付盗賊改

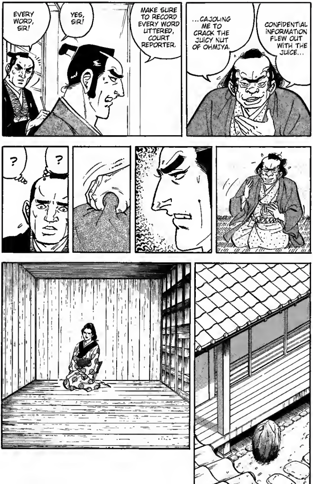

I GUESS THE ACTION IS OVER.
IT SOUNDS LIKE IT.

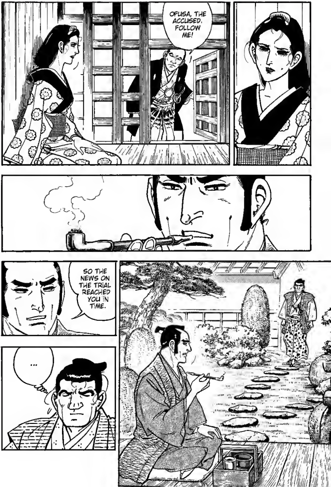

KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI WAS BROUGHT TO JUSTICE ON THE DAY SUBSEQUENT I.E. FEBRUARY 1.
火付盗賊改
I PRAY FOR YOUR GRACEFUL MERCY...
I BEG YOU TO SPARE MY LIFE.
...FROM THE VERY BOTTOM OF MY SINCERE HEART.
SHAME ON YOU, KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI!

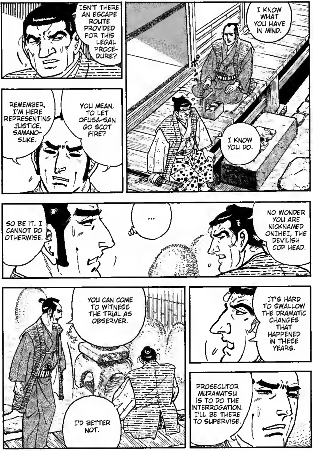

...
HAVING CONSPIRED AND COMMITTED NUMEROUS EVIL ACTS, YOU SHAMELESSLY PLEAD MERCY FOR YOUR LIFE.
WHERE DID YOUR PRIDE AS GOKENIN GO?!
A DEATH SENTENCE IS A FOREGONE VERDICT.
...

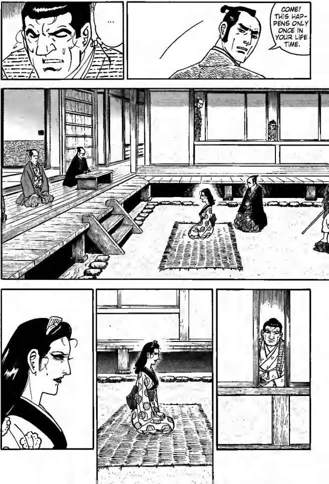

IS THERE ANY LAST WORD YOU WISH TO BE KEPT IN THE RECORD BEFORE YOU GO?
NOTHING, EXCEPT I CURSE YOUR DEVILISH ACTION.
DEVILISHNESS ON MY PART IS BENIGN COMPARED WITH YOURS. BESIDES YOU DID NOT USE YOUR BRAIN.
WHY DIDN'T YOU DESERT EDO FOR GOOD WHEN YOU ESCAPED OUR RAID LAST YEAR?
THAT'S BECAUSE OF MY LIFE PHILOSOPHY.
ONCE AWAY FROM EDO, IT IS HARD TO COLLECT EASY MONEY TO ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR LIFE ON. I ADMIT THAT I WAS...
...STUPID ENOUGH TO DRAG THAT ASS, BAGWORM IN THE ACTION.
...
BUT YOU WERE SMART ENOUGH ...
...TO PICK A JUICY TARGET LIKE OHMIYA.
YAH, I LEARNED A LOT AROUND THE HATTORI GAMBLING TABLE, ESPECIALLY ABOUT OHMIYA.
I DID NOT ASK FOR THE LESSON.
WHAT LESSON ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THE ROLLING DICE WOULDN'T TEACH YOU ABOUT OHMIYA.

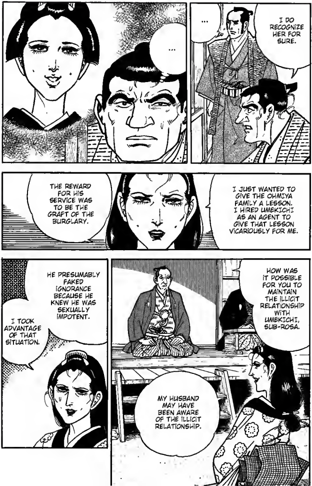

THE LESSON WAS GIVEN BY THE SEXY WOMAN CROUPIER OF THE JOINT WHO HAD BEEN THE WIFE OF THE HEAD OF OHMIYA.
SHE AND ME SHARED SAME HOBBIES, NAMELY DRINKING AND SUCKING.
AND THE SUCKING PART DEVELOPED INTO F--KING.
!
WHAT A SHAME! THIS RASCAL...
...MAKING LOVE TO HER!
SHE WAS PUSHING FORTY...
...BUT WAS STILL CAPABLE OF PRODUCING A LOT OF JUICE FOR ME TO SUCK UP.
...

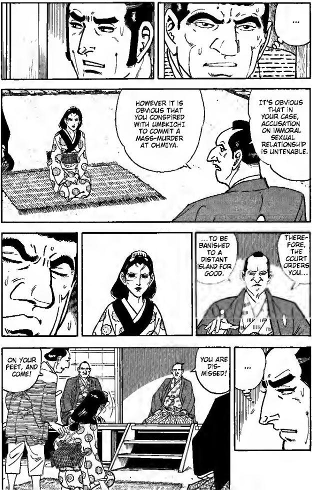

MAKE SURE TO RECORD EVERY WORD UTTERED, COURT REPORTER.
YES, SIR!
EVERY WORD, SIR!
...CAJOLING ME TO CRACK THE JUICY NUT OF OHMIYA.
CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION FLEW OUT WITH THE JUICE...
?
?

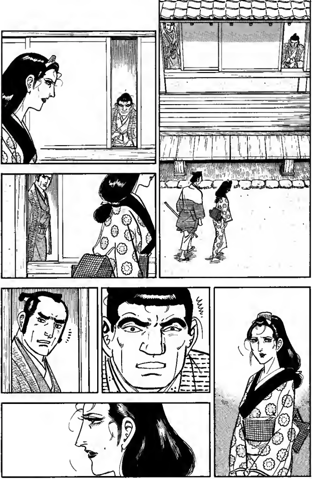

OFUSA, THE ACCUSED. FOLLOW ME!
SO THE NEWS ON THE TRIAL REACHED YOU IN TIME.
...

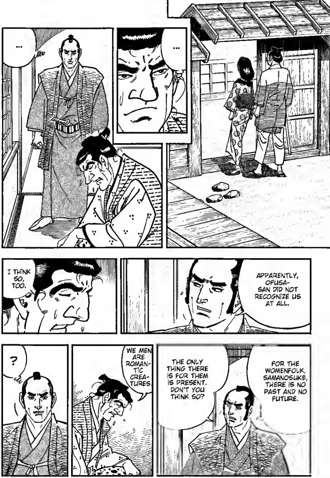

ISN'T THERE AN ESCAPE ROUTE PROVIDED FOR THIS LEGAL PROCEDURE?
YOU MEAN, TO LET OFUSA-SAN GO SCOT FIRE?
REMEMBER, I'M HERE REPRESENTING JUSTICE, SAMANOSUKE.
I KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND.
I KNOW YOU DO.
SO BE IT. I CANNOT DO OTHERWISE.
...
NO WONDER YOU ARE NICKNAMED ONIHEI, THE DEVILISH COP HEAD.
YOU CAN COME TO WITNESS THE TRIAL AS OBSERVER.
I'D BETTER NOT.
IT'S HARD TO SWALLOW THE DRAMATIC CHANGES THAT HAPPENED IN THESE YEARS.
PROSECUTOR MURAMATSU IS TO DO THE INTERROGATION. I'LL BE THERE TO SUPERVISE.

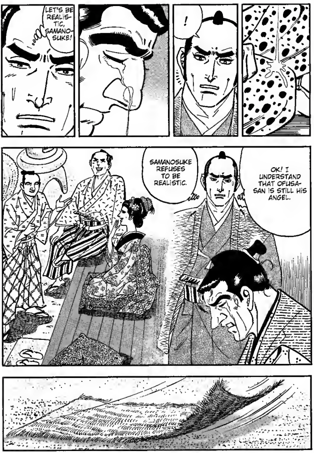

COME! THIS HAPPENS ONLY ONCE IN YOUR LIFE TIME.
...

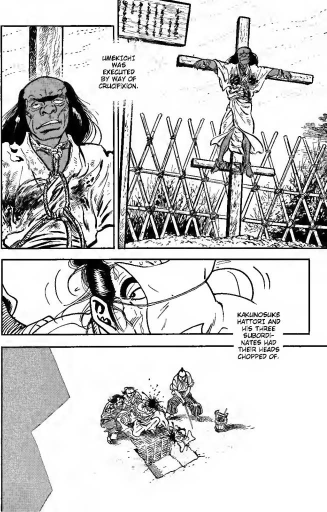

I DO RECOGNIZE HER FOR SURE.
...
...
I JUST WANTED TO GIVE THE OHMIYA FAMILY A LESSON. I HIRED UMEKICHI AS AN AGENT TO GIVE THAT LESSON VICARIOUSLY FOR ME.
THE REWARD FOR HIS SERVICE WAS TO BE THE GRAFT OF THE BURGLARY.
HOW WAS IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO MAINTAIN THE ILLICIT RELATIONSHIP WITH UMEKICHI, SUB-ROSA.
MY HUSBAND MAY HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THE ILLICIT RELATIONSHIP.
HE PRESUMABLY FAKED IGNORANCE BECAUSE HE KNEW HE WAS SEXUALLY IMPOTENT.
I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THAT SITUATION.

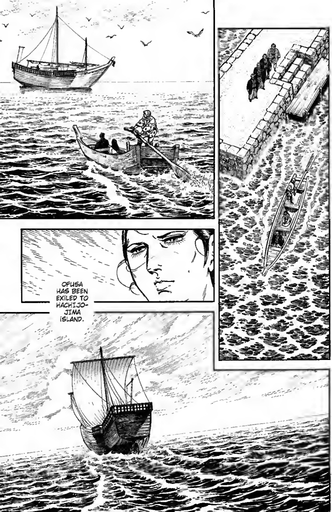

...
IT'S OBVIOUS THAT IN YOUR CASE, ACCUSATION ON IMMORAL SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP IS UNTENABLE.
HOWEVER IT IS OBVIOUS THAT YOU CONSPIRED WITH UMEKICHI TO COMMIT A MASS-MURDER AT OHMIYA.
THEREFORE, THE COURT ORDERS YOU...
...TO BE BANISHED TO A DISTANT ISLAND FOR GOOD.
...
YOU ARE DISMISSED!
ON YOUR FEET, AND COME!

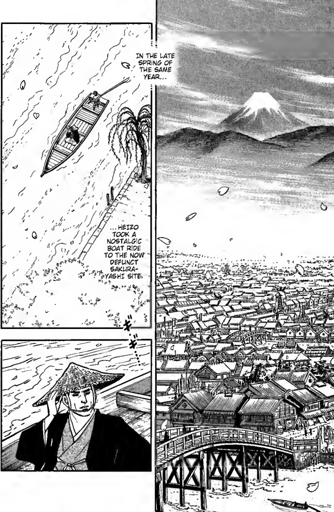


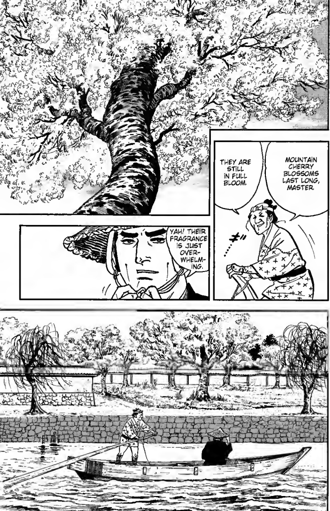

...
...
APPARENTLY, OFUSA-SAN DID NOT RECOGNIZE US AT ALL.
I THINK SO, TOO.
FOR THE WOMENFOLK, SAMANOSUKE, THERE IS NO PAST AND NO FUTURE.
THE ONLY THING THERE IS FOR THEM IS PRESENT. DON'T YOU THINK SO?
WE MEN ARE ROMANTIC CREATURES.
?

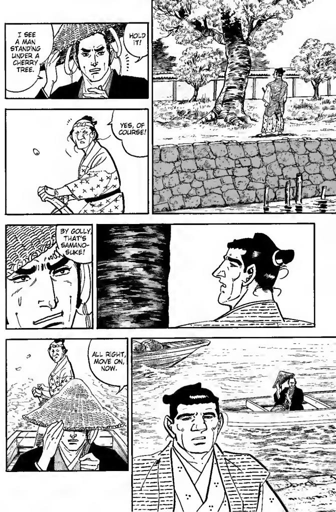

LET'S BE REALISTIC, SAMANOSUKE!
!
SAMANOSUKE REFUSES TO BE REALISTIC.
OK! I UNDERSTAND THAT OFUSA-SAN IS STILL HIS ANGEL.

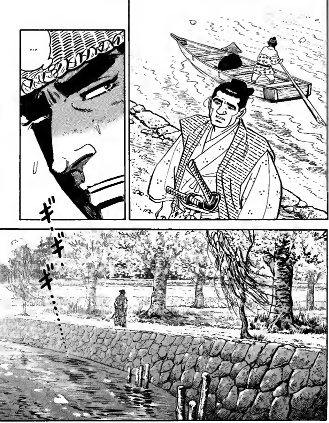

UMEKICHI WAS EXECUTED BY WAY OF CRUCIFIXION.
KAKUNOSUKE HATTORI AND HIS THREE SUBORDINATES HAD THEIR HEADS CHOPPED OF.


OFUSA HAS BEEN EXILED TO HACHIJO-JIMA ISLAND.


IN THE LATE SPRING OF THE SAME YEAR...
...HEIZO TOOK A NOSTALGIC BOAT RIDE TO THE NOW DEFUNCT SAKURA-YASHI SITE.
ギ ギ...


MOUNTAIN CHERRY BLOSSOMS LAST LONG, MASTER.
THEY ARE STILL IN FULL BLOOM.
YAH! THEIR FRAGRANCE IS JUST OVERWHELMING.


I SEE A MAN STANDING UNDER A CHERRY TREE.
HOLD IT!
YES, OF COURSE!
BY GOLLY, THAT'S SAMANOSUKE!
ALL RIGHT, MOVE ON, NOW.



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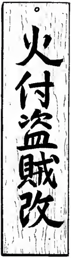
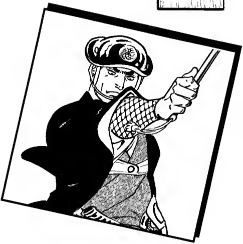

火付盗賊改



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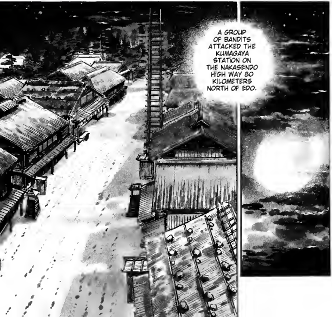
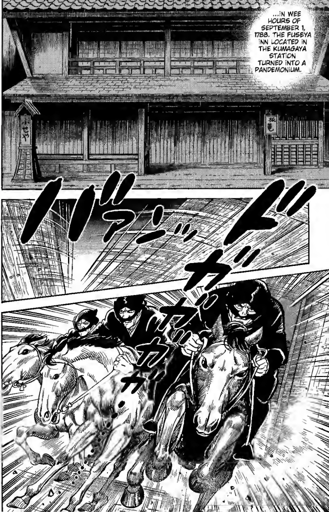
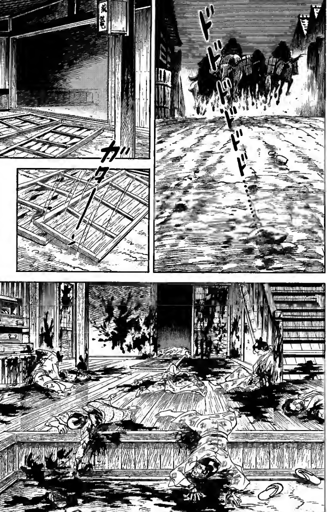
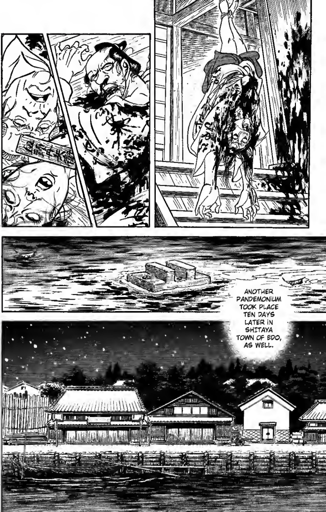
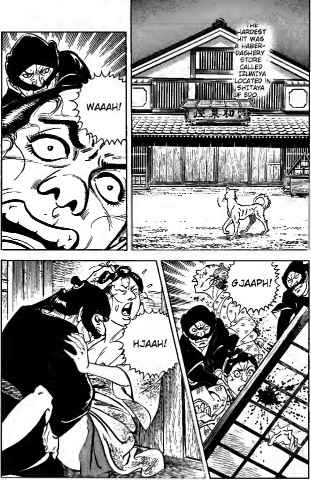
Episode 3 THE BLOOD-THIRSTY TANBEI

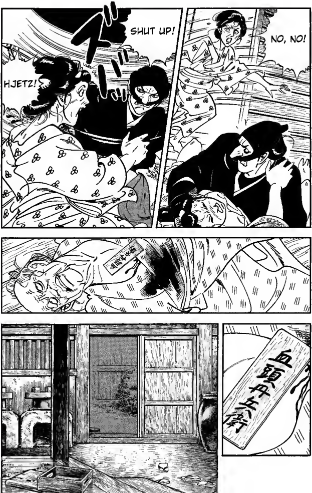

A GROUP OF BANDITS ATTACKED THE KUMAGAYA STATION ON THE NAKASENDO HIGH WAY 80 KILOMETERS NORTH OF EDO.

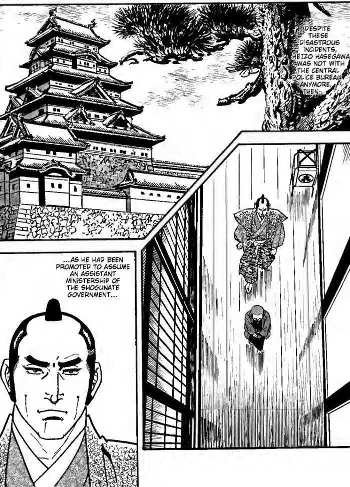

...IN WEE HOURS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 1788. THE FUSEYA INN LOCATED IN THE KUMAGAYA STATION TURNED INTO A PANDEMONIUM.
ふせや
バァンッ
ドガガッカカガ

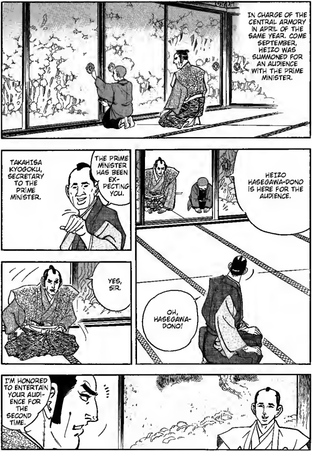

ドドドドドド……
旅籠
ガターン

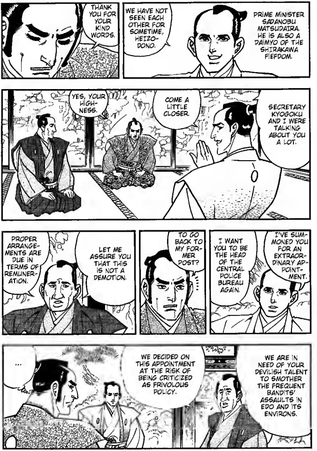

ANOTHER PANDEMONIUM TOOK PLACE TEN DAYS LATER IN SHITAYA TOWN OF EDO, AS WELL.

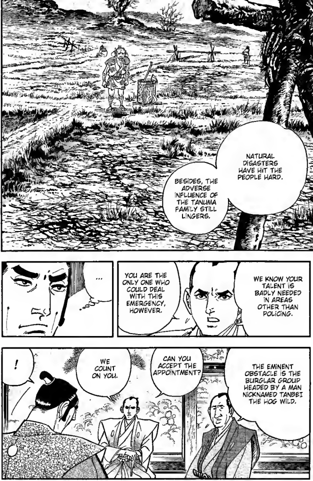

THE HARDEST HIT WAS A HABERDASHERY STORE CALLED IZUMIYA LOCATED IN SHITAYA OF EDO.
WAAAH!
GJAAPH!
HJAAH!

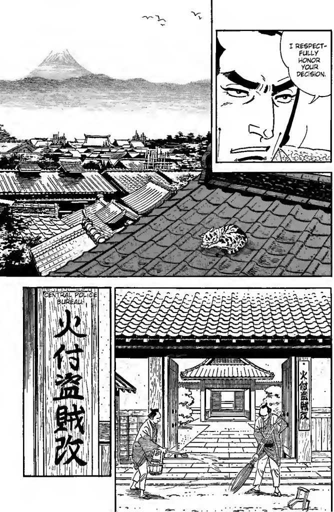

NO, NO!
SHUT UP!
ズバッ
HJETZ!
血頭丹兵衛

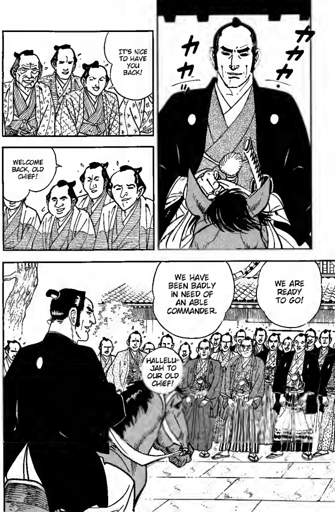

DESPITE THESE DISASTROUS INCIDENTS, HEIZO HASEGAWA WAS NOT WITH THE CENTRAL POLICE BUREAU ANYMORE, THEN...
...AS HE HAD BEEN PROMOTED TO ASSUME AN ASSISTANT MINISTERSHIP OF THE SHOGUNATE GOVERNMENT...

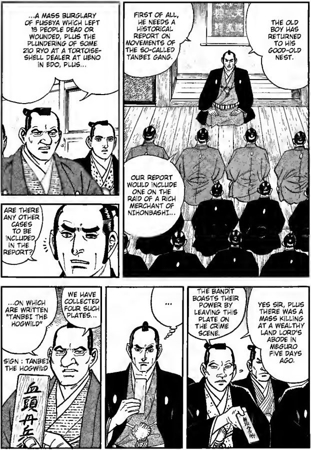

IN CHARGE OF THE CENTRAL ARMORY IN APRIL OF THE SAME YEAR. COME SEPTEMBER, HEIZO WAS SUMMONED FOR AN AUDIENCE WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.
TAKAHISA KYOGOKU, SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER.
THE PRIME MINISTER HAS BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
HEIZO HASEGAWA-DONO IS HERE FOR THE AUDIENCE.
YES, SIR.
OH, HASEGAWA-DONO!
I'M HONORED TO ENTERTAIN YOUR AUDIENCE FOR THE SECOND TIME.

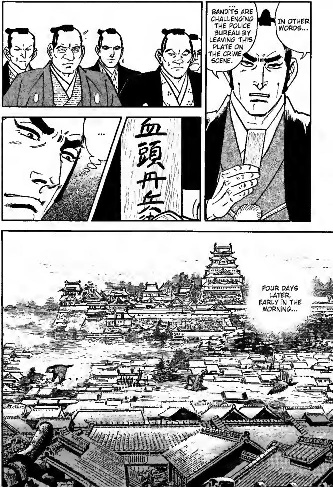

PRIME MINISTER SADANOBU MATSUDAIRA. HE IS ALSO A DAIMYO OF THE SHIRAKAWA FIEFDOM.
WE HAVE NOT SEEN EACH OTHER FOR SOMETIME, HEIZO-DONO.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND WORDS.
SECRETARY KYOGOKU AND I WERE TALKING ABOUT YOU A LOT.
COME A LITTLE CLOSER.
YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.
I'VE SUMMONED YOU FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY APPOINTMENT.
I WANT YOU TO BE THE HEAD OF THE CENTRAL POLICE BUREAU AGAIN.
TO GO BACK TO MY FORMER POST?
LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT THIS IS NOT A DEMOTION.
PROPER ARRANGEMENTS ARE DUE IN TERMS OF REMUNERATION.
WE ARE IN NEED OF YOUR DEVILISH TALENT TO SMOTHER THE FREQUENT BANDITS' ASSAULTS IN EDO AND ITS ENVIRONS.
WE DECIDED ON THIS APPOINTMENT AT THE RISK OF BEING CRITICIZED AS FRIVOLOUS POLICY.
...

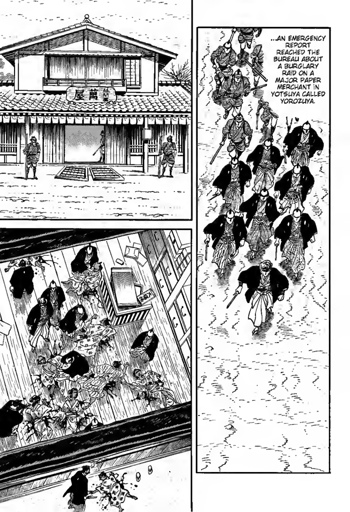

NATURAL DISASTERS HAVE HIT THE PEOPLE HARD.
BESIDES, THE ADVERSE INFLUENCE OF THE TANUMA FAMILY STILL LINGERS.
WE KNOW YOUR TALENT IS BADLY NEEDED IN AREAS OTHER THAN POLICING.
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD DEAL WITH THIS EMERGENCY, HOWEVER.
...
THE EMINENT OBSTACLE IS THE BURGLAR GROUP HEADED BY A MAN NICKNAMED TANBEI THE HOG WILD.
CAN YOU ACCEPT THE APPOINTMENT?
WE COUNT ON YOU.
!

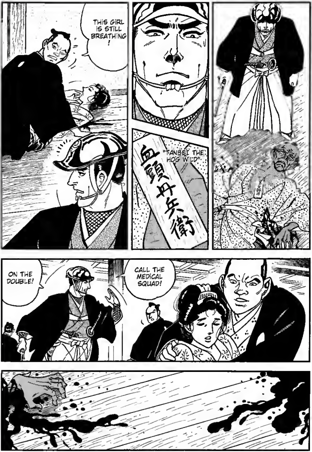

I RESPECTFULLY HONOR YOUR DECISION.
CENTRAL POLICE BUREAU.
火付盗賊改
火付盗賊改

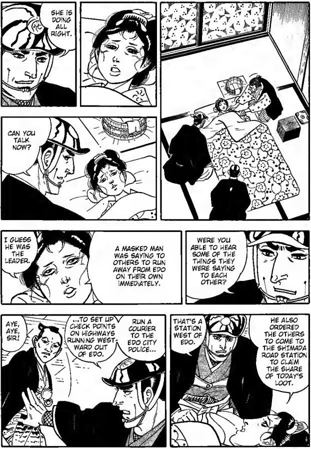

IT'S NICE TO HAVE YOU BACK!
WELCOME BACK, OLD CHIEF!
カ カ
カ カ カ
WE HAVE BEEN BADLY IN NEED OF AN ABLE COMMANDER.
WE ARE READY TO GO!
HALLELUJAH TO OUR OLD CHIEF!

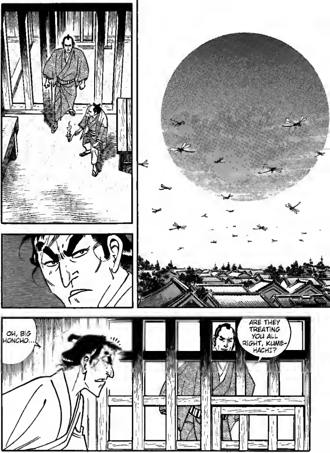

THE OLD BOY HAS RETURNED TO HIS GOOD-OLD NEST.
FIRST OF ALL, HE NEEDS A HISTORICAL REPORT ON MOVEMENTS OF THE SO-CALLED TANBEI GANG.
OUR REPORT WOULD INCLUDE ONE ON THE RAID OF A RICH MERCHANT OF NIHONBASHI...
...A MASS BURGLARY OF FUSEYA WHICH LEFT 18 PEOPLE DEAD OR WOUNDED, PLUS THE PLUNDERING OF SOME 210 RYO AT A TORTOISE-SHELL DEALER AT UENO IN EDO, PLUS...
ARE THERE ANY OTHER CASES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE REPORT?
YES SIR, PLUS THERE WAS A MASS KILLING AT A WEALTHY LAND LORD'S ABODE IN MEGURO FIVE DAYS AGO.
THE BANDIT BOASTS THEIR POWER BY LEAVING THIS PLATE ON THE CRIME SCENE.
...
WE HAVE COLLECTED FOUR SUCH PLATES...
...ON WHICH ARE WRITTEN "TANBEI THE HOGWILD"
SIGN : TANBEI THE HOGWILD
血頭丹兵

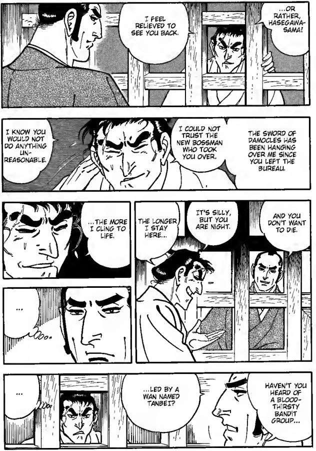

IN OTHER WORDS...
...
BANDITS ARE CHALLENGING THE POLICE BUREAU BY LEAVING THIS PLATE ON THE CRIME SCENE.
血頭丹兵
...
FOUR DAYS LATER, EARLY IN THE MORNING...

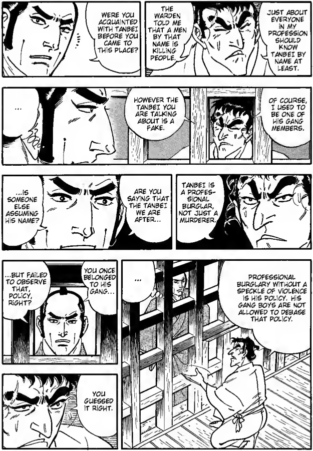

紙問屋
萬屋
...AN EMERGENCY REPORT REACHED THE BUREAU ABOUT A BURGLARY RAID ON A MAJOR PAPER MERCHANT IN YOTSUYA CALLED YOROZUYA.

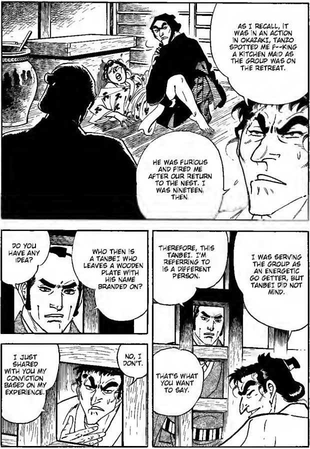

血頭丹兵衛
"TANBEI THE HOG WILD"
THIS GIRL IS STILL BREATHING!
CALL THE MEDICAL SQUAD!
ON THE DOUBLE!

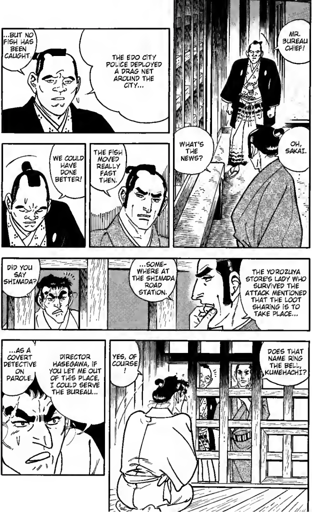

SHE IS DOING ALL RIGHT.
CAN YOU TALK NOW?
WERE YOU ABLE TO HEAR SOME OF THE THINGS THEY WERE SAYING TO EACH OTHER?
A MASKED MAN WAS SAYING TO OTHERS TO RUN AWAY FROM EDO ON THEIR OWN IMMEDIATELY.
I GUESS HE WAS THE LEADER.
HE ALSO ORDERED THE OTHERS TO COME TO THE SHIMADA ROAD STATION TO CLAIM THE SHARE OF TODAY'S LOOT.
THAT'S A STATION WEST OF EDO.
RUN A COURIER TO THE EDO CITY POLICE...
...TO SET UP CHECK POINTS ON HIGHWAYS RUNNING WESTWARD OUT OF EDO.
AYE, AYE, SIR!

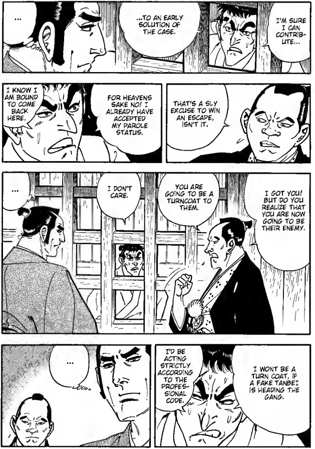

ARE THEY TREATING YOU ALL RIGHT, KUME-HACHI?
OH, BIG HONCHO...

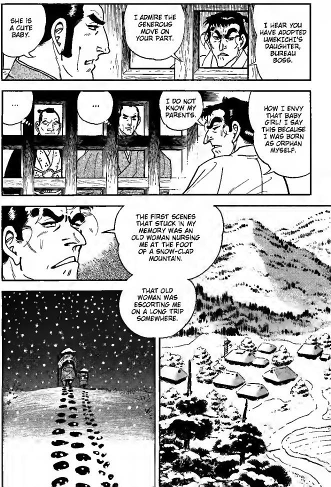

...OR RATHER, HASEGAWA-SAMA!
I FEEL RELIEVED TO SEE YOU BACK.
THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES HAS BEEN HANGING OVER ME SINCE YOU LEFT THE BUREAU.
I COULD NOT TRUST THE NEW BOSSMAN WHO TOOK YOU OVER.
I KNOW YOU WOULD NOT DO ANYTHING UNREASONABLE.
AND YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE.
IT'S SILLY, BUT YOU ARE NiGHT.
THE LONGER I STAY HERE...
...THE MORE I CLING TO LIFE.
...
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD OF A BLOODTHIRSTY BANDIT GROUP...
...LED BY A WAN NAMED TANBEI?
...

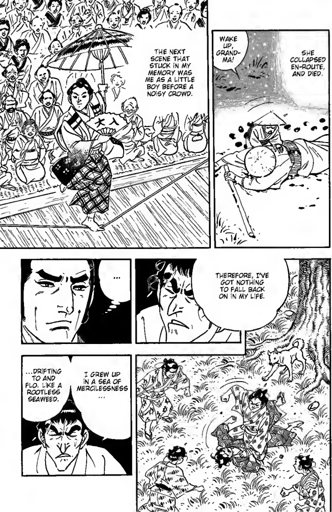

WERE YOU ACQUAINTED WITH TANBEI BEFORE YOU CAME TO THIS PLACE?
JUST ABOUT EVERYONE IN MY PROFESSION SHOULD KNOW TANBEI BY NAME AT LEAST.
THE WARDEN TOLD ME THAT A MEN BY THAT NAME IS KILLING PEOPLE.
OF COURSE, I USED TO BE ONE OF HIS GANG MEMBERS.
HOWEVER THE TANBEI YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT IS A FAKE.
...
ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE TANBEI WE ARE AFTER...
...IS SOMEONE ELSE ASSUMING HIS NAME?
TANBEI IS A PROFESSIONAL BURGLAR, NOT JUST A MURDERER.
PROFESSIONAL BURGLARY WITHOUT A SPECKLE OF VIOLENCE IS HIS POLICY. HIS GANG BOYS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO DEBASE THAT POLICY.
...
YOU ONCE BELONGED TO HIS GANG...
...BUT FAILED TO OBSERVE THAT, POLICY, RIGHT?
YOU GUESSED IT RIGHT.

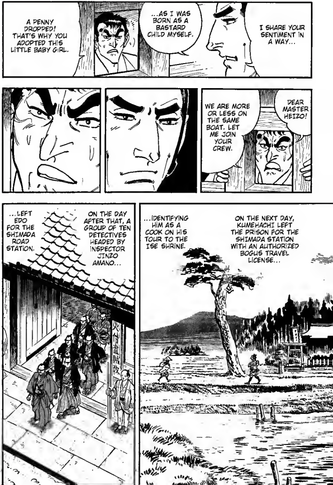

AS I RECALL, IT WAS IN AN ACTION IN OKAZAKI, TANZO SPOTTED ME F--KING A KITCHEN MAID AS THE GROUP WAS ON THE RETREAT.
HE WAS FURIOUS AND FIRED ME AFTER OUR RETURN TO THE NEST. I WAS NINETEEN, THEN.
I WAS SERVING THE GROUP AS AN ENERGETIC GO GETTER, BUT TANBEI DID NOT MIND.
THEREFORE, THIS TANBEI. I'M REFERRING TO IS A DIFFERENT PERSON.
THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY.
WHO THEN IS A TANBEI WHO LEAVES A WOODEN PLATE WITH HIS NAME BRANDED ON?
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA?
NO, I DON'T.
I JUST SHARED WITH YOU MY CONVICTION BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE.

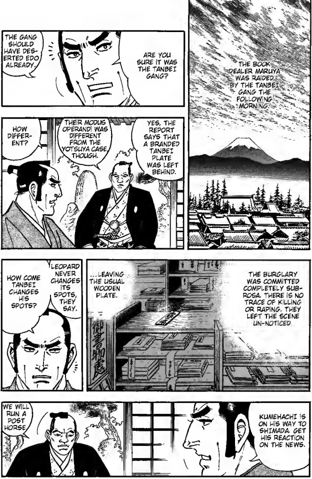

MR. BUREAU CHIEF!
OH, SAKAI.
WHAT'S THE NEWS?
THE EDO CITY POLICE DEPLOYED A DRAG NET AROUND THE CITY...
...BUT NO FISH HAS BEEN CAUGHT.
THE FISH MOVED REALLY FAST THEN.
WE COULD HAVE DONE BETTER!
THE YOROZUYA STORE'S LADY WHO SURVIVED THE ATTACK MENTIONED THAT THE LOOT SHARING IS TO TAKE PLACE...
...SOMEWHERE AT THE SHIMADA ROAD STATION.
DID YOU SAY SHIMADA?
DOES THAT NAME RING THE BELL, KUMEHACHI?
YES, OF COURSE!
DIRECTOR HASEGAWA, IF YOU LET ME OUT OF THIS PLACE, I COULD SERVE THE BUREAU...
...AS A COVERT DETECTIVE ON PAROLE.

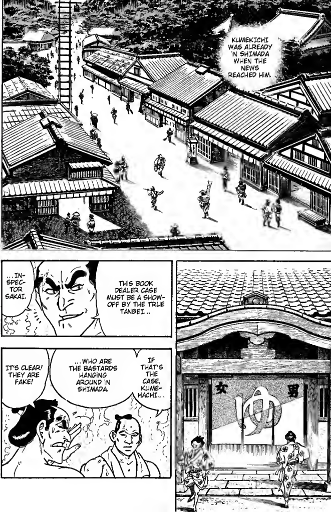

I'M SURE I CAN CONTRIBUTE...
...TO AN EARLY SOLUTION OF THE CASE.
...
THAT'S A SLY EXCUSE TO WIN AN ESCAPE, ISN'T IT.
FOR HEAVENS SAKE NO! I ALREADY HAVE ACCEPTED MY PAROLE STATUS.
I KNOW I AM BOUND TO COME BACK HERE.
I GOT YOU! BUT DO YOU REALIZE THAT YOU ARE NOW GOING TO BE THEIR ENEMY.
YOU ARE GOING TO BE A TURNCOAT TO THEM.
I DON'T CARE.
...
I WONT BE A TURN COAT, IF A FAKE TANBEI IS HEADING THE GANG.
I'D BE ACTING STRICTLY ACCORDING TO THE PROFESSIONAL CODE.
...


I HEAR YOU HAVE ADOPTED UMEKICHI'S DAUGHTER, BUREAU BOSS.
I ADMIRE THE GENEROUS MOVE ON YOUR PART.
SHE IS A CUTE BABY.
HOW I ENVY THAT BABY GIRL! I SAY THIS BECAUSE I WAS BORN AS ORPHAN MYSELF.
I DO NOT KNOW MY PARENTS.
...
...
THE FIRST SCENES THAT STUCK IN MY MEMORY WAS AN OLD WOMAN NURSING ME AT THE FOOT OF A SNOW-CLAD MOUNTAIN.
THAT OLD WOMAN WAS ESCORTING ME ON A LONG TRIP SOMEWHERE.


WAKE UP, GRANDMA!
SHE COLLAPSED EN-ROUTE, AND DIED.
THE NEXT SCENE THAT STUCK IN MY MEMORY WAS ME AS A LITTLE BOY BEFORE A NOISY CROWD.
大入
THEREFORE, I'VE GOT NOTHING TO FALL BACK ON IN MY LIFE.
...
I GREW UP IN A SEA OF MERCILESSNESS ...
...DRIFTING TO AND FLO, LIKE A ROOTLESS SEAWEED.


I SHARE YOUR SENTIMENT IN A WAY...
...AS I WAS BORN AS A BASTARD CHILD MYSELF.
A PENNY DROPPED! THAT'S WHY YOU ADOPTED THIS LITTLE BABY GIRL.
DEAR MASTER HEIZO!
WE ARE MORE OR LESS ON THE SAME BOAT. LET ME JOIN YOUR CREW.
ON THE NEXT DAY, KUMEHACHI LEFT THE PRISON FOR THE SHIMADA STATION WITH AN AUTHORIZED BOGUS TRAVEL LICENSE...
...IDENTIFYING HIM AS A COOK ON HIS TOUR TO THE ISE SHRINE.
ON THE DAY AFTER THAT, A GROUP OF TEN DETECTIVES HEADED BY INSPECTOR JINZO AMANO...
...LEFT EDO FOR THE SHIMADA ROAD STATION.
火付盗賊改


THE BOOK DEALER MARUYA WAS RAIDED BY THE TANBEI GANG THE FOLLOWING MORNING.
ARE YOU SURE IT WAS THE TANBEI GANG?
THE GANG SHOULD HAVE DESERTED EDO ALREADY.
YES, THE REPORT SAYS THAT A BRANDED TANBEI PLATE WAS LEFT BEHIND.
THEIR MODUS OPERANDI WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE YOTSUYA CASE, THOUGH.
HOW DIFFERENT?
THE BURGLARY WAS COMMITTED COMPLETELY SUB-ROSA. THERE IS NO TRACE OF KILLING OR RAPING. THEY LEFT THE SCENE UN-NOTICED
...LEAVING THE USUAL WOODEN PLATE.
御書物處
LEOPARD NEVER CHANGES ITS SPOTS, THEY SAY.
HOW COME TANBEI CHANGES HIS SPOTS?
KUMEHACHI IS ON HIS WAY TO SHIMADA. GET HIS REACTION ON THE NEWS.
WE WILL RUN A POST HORSE


KUMEKICHI WAS ALREADY IN SHIMADA WHEN THE NEWS REACHED HIM.
男
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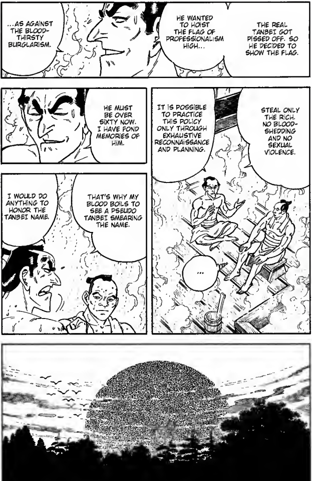
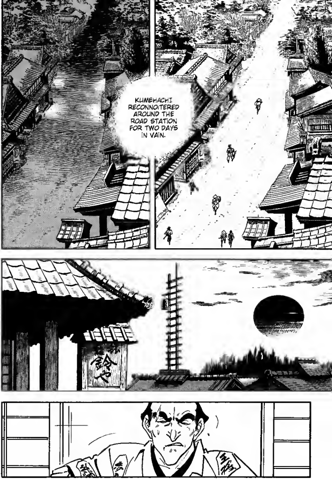
女
THIS BOOK DEALER CASE MUST BE A SHOW-OFF BY THE TRUE TANBEI...
...INSPECTOR SAKAI.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, KUMEHACHI...
...WHO ARE THE BASTARDS HANGING AROUND IN SHIMADA.
IT'S CLEAR! THEY ARE FAKE!


THE REAL TANBEI GOT PISSED OFF. SO HE DECIDED TO SHOW THE FLAG.
HE WANTED TO HOIST THE FLAG OF PROFESSIONALISM HIGH...
...AS AGAINST THE BLOODTHIRSTY BURGLARISM.
STEAL ONLY THE RICH. NO BLOODSHEDDING AND NO SEXUAL VIOLENCE.
IT IS POSSIBLE TO PRACTICE THIS POLICY ONLY THROUGH EXHAUSTIVE RECONNAISSANCE AND PLANNING.
...
HE MUST BE OVER SIXTY NOW. I HAVE FOND MEMORIES OF HIM.
THAT'S WHY MY BLOOD BOILS TO SEE A PSEUDO TANBEI SMEARING THE NAME.
I WOULD DO ANYTHING TO HONOR THE TANBEI NAME.


KUMEHACHI RECONNOITERED AROUND THE ROAD STATION FOR TWO DAYS IN VAIN.
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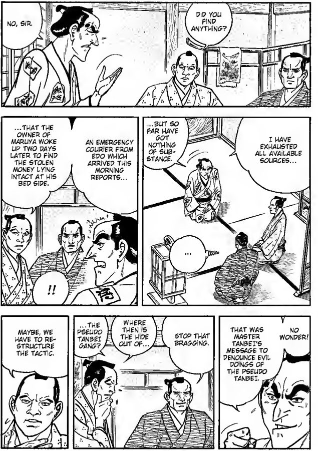
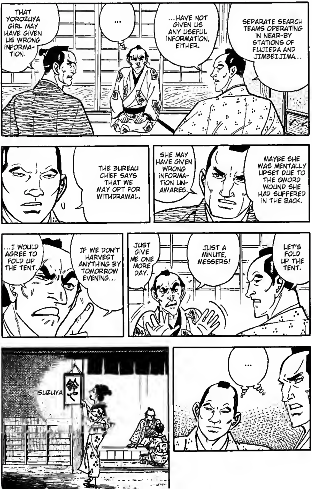
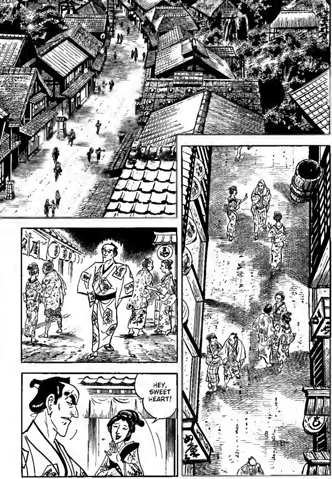
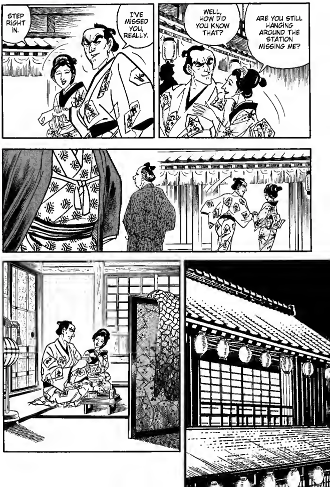
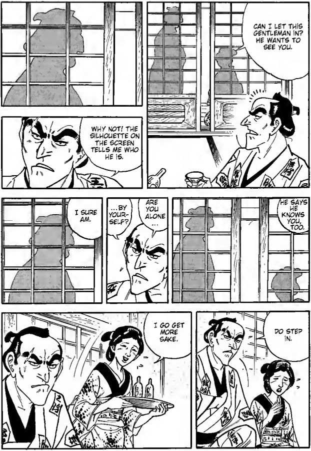
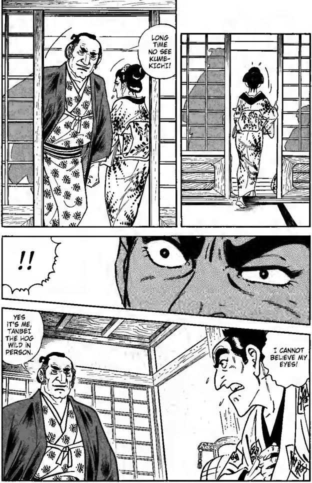

DID YOU FIND ANYTHING?
NO, SIR.
I HAVE EXHAUSTED ALL AVAILABLE SOURCES...
...BUT SO FAR HAVE GOT NOTHING OF SUB-STANCE.
...
AN EMERGENCY COURIER FROM EDO WHICH ARRIVED THIS MORNING REPORTS...
...THAT THE OWNER OF MARUYA WOKE UP TWO DAYS LATER TO FIND THE STOLEN MONEY LYING INTACT AT HIS BED SIDE.
!!
NO WONDER!
THAT WAS MASTER TANBEI'S MESSAGE TO DENOUNCE EVIL DOINGS OF THE PSEUDO TANBEI.
STOP THAT BRAGGING.
WHERE THEN IS THE HIDE OUT OF...
...THE PSEUDO TANBEI GANG?
MAYBE, WE HAVE TO RE-STRUCTURE THE TACTIC.

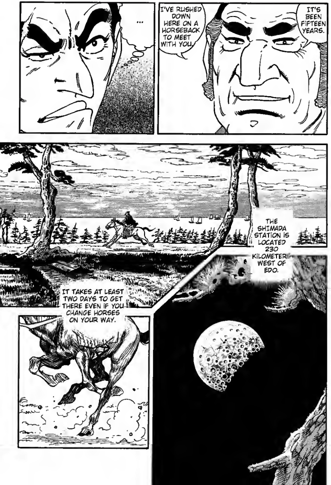

SEPARATE SEARCH TEAMS OPERATING IN NEAR-BY STATIONS OF FUJIEDA AND JIMBEIJIMA...
...HAVE NOT GIVEN US ANY USEFUL INFORMATION, EITHER.
...
THAT YOROZUYA GIRL MAY HAVE GIVEN US WRONG INFORMATION.
MAYBE SHE WAS MENTALLY UPSET DUE TO THE SWORD WOUND SHE HAD SUFFERED IN THE BACK.
SHE MAY HAVE GIVEN WRONG INFORMATION UNAWARES.
THE BUREAU CHIEF SAYS THAT WE MAY OPT FOR WITHDRAWAL.
LET'S FOLD UP THE TENT.
JUST A MINUTE, MESSERS!
JUST GIVE ME ONE MORE DAY.
IF WE DON'T HARVEST ANYTHING BY TOMORROW EVENING...
...I WOULD AGREE TO FOLD UP THE TENT.
...
SUZUYA
鈴

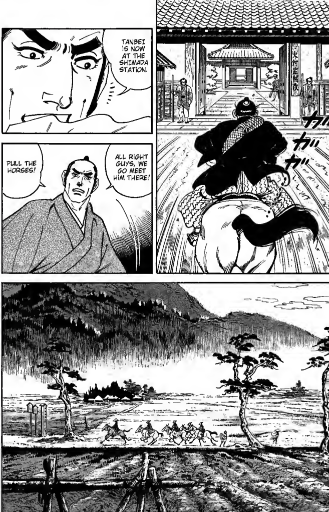

HEY, SWEET HEART!


STEP RIGHT IN.
I'VE MISSED YOU, REALLY.
ARE YOU STILL HANGING AROUND THE STATION MISSING ME?
WELL, HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?


CAN I LET THIS GENTLEMAN IN? HE WANTS TO SEE YOU.
WHY NOT! THE SILHOUETTE ON THE SCREEN TELLS ME WHO HE IS.
HE SAYS HE KNOWS YOU, TOO.
ARE YOU ALONE...
...BY YOURSELF?
I SURE AM.
DO STEP IN.
I GO GET MORE SAKE.


LONG TIME NO SEE KUME-KICHI!
!!
I CANNOT BELIEVE MY EYES!
YES IT'S ME, TANBEI THE HOG WILD IN PERSON.


IT'S BEEN FIFTEEN YEARS.
I'VE RUSHED DOWN HERE ON A HORSEBACK TO MEET WITH YOU.
...
THE SHIMADA STATION IS LOCATED 230 KILOMETERS WEST OF EDO.
IT TAKES AT LEAST TWO DAYS TO GET THERE EVEN IF YOU CHANGE HORSES ON YOUR WAY.


火付盗賊改
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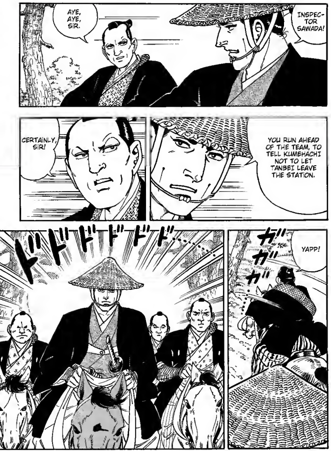
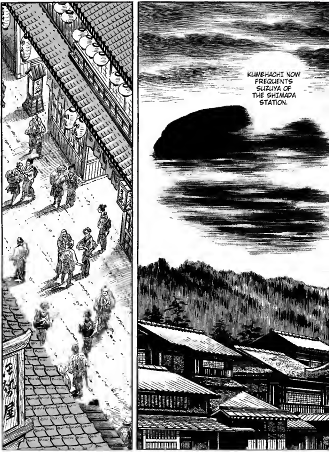
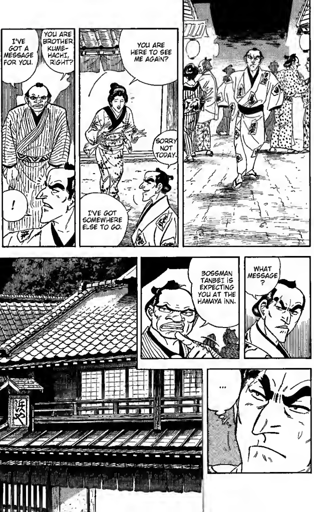
TANBEI IS NOW AT THE SHIMADA STATION.
ALL RIGHT GUYS, WE GO MEET HIM THERE!
PULL THE HORSES!


INSPEC-TOR SAWADA!
AYE, AYE, SIR.
YOU RUN AHEAD OF THE TEAM, TO TELL KUMEHACHI NOT TO LET TANBEI LEAVE THE STATION.
CERTAINLY, SIR!
ガ ガ ガ
YAPP!
ドドドドドド……


KUMEHACHI NOW FREQUENTS SUZUYA OF THE SHIMADA STATION.


YOU ARE HERE TO SEE ME AGAIN?
SORRY NOT TODAY.
I'VE GOT SOMEWHERE ELSE TO GO.
YOU ARE BROTHER KUME-HACHI, RIGHT?
I'VE GOT A MESSAGE FOR YOU.
!
WHAT MESSAGE?
BOSSMAN TANBEI IS EXPECTING YOU AT THE HAMAYA INN.
...
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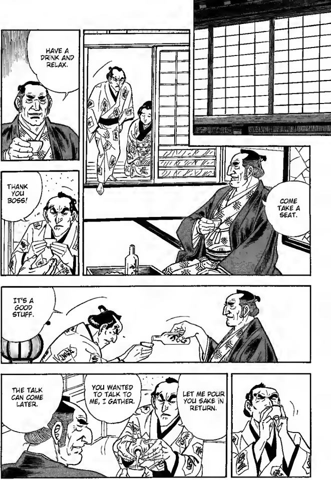
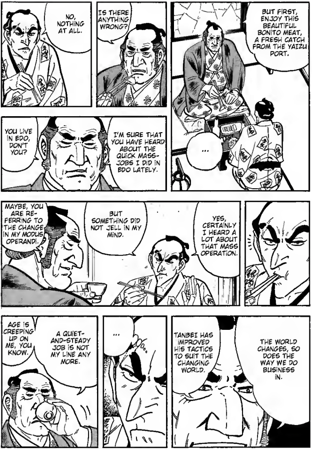
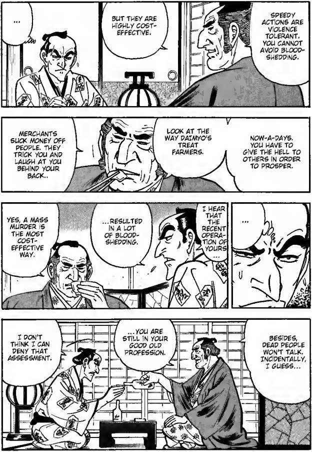
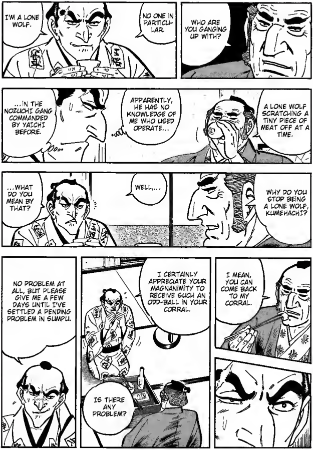
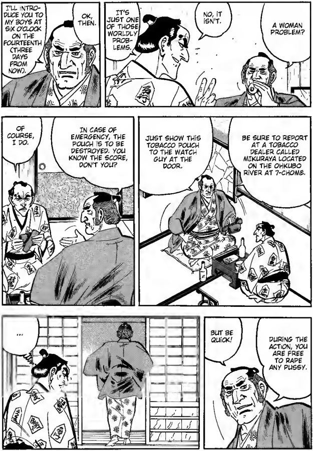
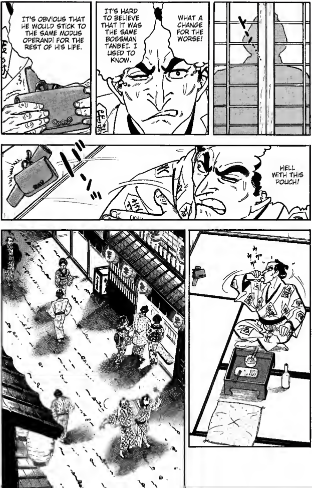

HAVE A DRINK AND RELAX.
COME TAKE A SEAT.
THANK YOU BOSS!
IT'S A GOOD STUFF.
LET ME POUR YOU SAKE IN RETURN.
YOU WANTED TO TALK TO ME, I GATHER.
THE TALK CAN COME LATER.

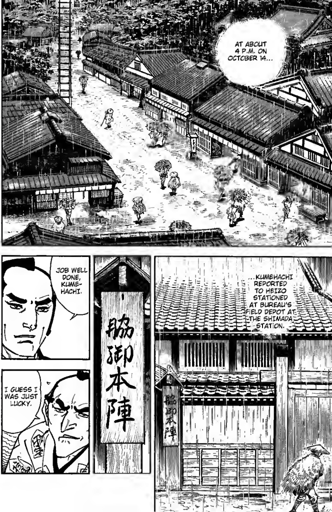

BUT FIRST, ENJOY THIS BEAUTIFUL BONITO MEAT, A FRESH CATCH FROM THE YAIZU PORT.
...
IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG?
NO, NOTHING AT ALL.
I'M SURE THAT YOU HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE QUICK MASS-JOBS I DID IN EDO LATELY.
YOU LIVE IN EDO, DON'T YOU?
YES, CERTAINLY I HEARD A LOT ABOUT THAT MASS OPERATION.
BUT SOMETHING DID NOT JELL IN MY MIND.
MAYBE, YOU ARE REFERRING TO THE CHANGE IN MY MODUS OPERANDI.
THE WORLD CHANGES, SO DOES THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS IN.
TANBEI HAS IMPROVED HIS TACTICS TO SUIT THE CHANGING WORLD.
...
A QUIET-AND-STEADY JOB IS NOT MY LINE ANY MORE.
AGE IS CREEPING UP ON ME, YOU KNOW.


SPEEDY ACTIONS ARE VIOLENCE TOLERANT. YOU CANNOT AVOID BLOOD-SHEDDING.
BUT THEY ARE HIGHLY COST-EFFECTIVE.
...
NOW-A-DAYS. YOU HAVE TO GIVE THE HELL TO OTHERS IN ORDER TO PROSPER.
LOOK AT THE WAY DAIMYO'S TREAT FARMERS.
MERCHANTS SUCK MONEY OFF PEOPLE. THEY TRICK YOU AND LAUGH AT YOU BEHIND YOUR BACK..
...
I HEAR THAT THE RECENT OPERATION OF YOURS...
...RESULTED IN A LOT OF BLOOD-SHEDDING.
YES, A MASS MURDER IS THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE WAY.
BESIDES, DEAD PEOPLE WON'T TALK. INCIDENTALLY, I GUESS...
...YOU ARE STILL IN YOUR GOOD OLD PROFESSION.
I DON'T THINK I CAN DENY THAT ASSESSMENT.


WHO ARE YOU GANGING UP WITH?
NO ONE IN PARTICULAR.
I'M A LONE WOLF.
A LONE WOLF SCRATCHING A TINY PIECE OF MEAT OFF AT A TIME.
APPARENTLY, HE HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF ME WHO USED OPERATE...
...IN THE NOZUCHI GANG COMMANDED BY YAICHI BEFORE.
WHY DO YOU STOP BEING A LONE WOLF, KUMEHACHI?
WELL,...
...WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
I MEAN, YOU CAN COME BACK TO MY CORRAL.
I CERTAINLY APPRECIATE YOUR MAGNANIMITY TO RECEIVE SUCH AN ODD-BALL IN YOUR CORRAL.
IS THERE ANY PROBLEM?
NO PROBLEM AT ALL, BUT PLEASE GIVE ME A FEW DAYS UNTIL I'VE SETTLED A PENDING PROBLEM IN SUMPU.


A WOMAN PROBLEM?
NO, IT ISN'T.
IT'S JUST ONE OF THOSE WORLDLY PROBLEMS.
OK, THEN.
I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO MY BOYS AT SIX O'CLOCK ON THE FOURTEENTH (THREE DAYS FROM NOW.
BE SURE TO REPORT AT A TOBACCO DEALER CALLED MIKURAYA LOCATED ON THE OHKUBO RIVER AT 7-CHOME.
JUST SHOW THIS TOBACCO POUCH TO THE WATCH GUY AT THE DOOR.
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, THE POUCH IS TO BE DESTROYED. YOU KNOW THE SCORE, DON'T YOU?
OF COURSE, I DO.
DURING THE ACTION, YOU ARE FREE TO RAPE ANY PUSSY.
BUT BE QUICK!
...


IT'S OBVIOUS THAT HE WOULD STICK TO THE SAME MODUS OPERANDI FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE.
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT IT WAS THE SAME BOSSMAN TANBEI. I USED TO KNOW.
WHAT A CHANGE FOR THE WORSE!
HELL WITH THIS POUCH!


AT ABOUT 4 P.M. ON OCTOBER 14...
...KUMEHACHI REPORTED TO HEIZO STATIONED AT BUREAU'S FIELD DEPOT AT THE SHIMADA STATION.
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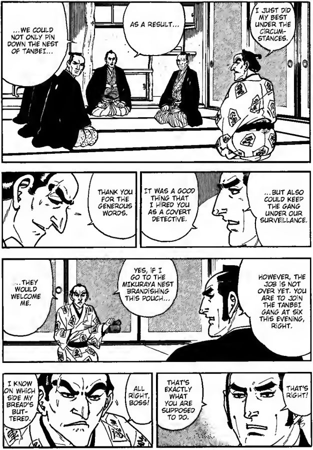
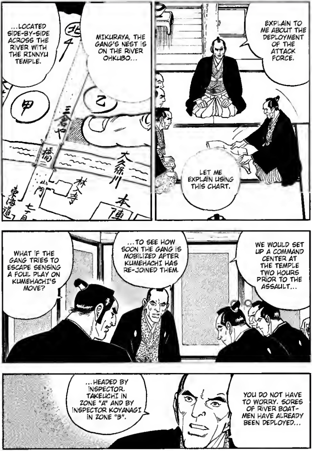
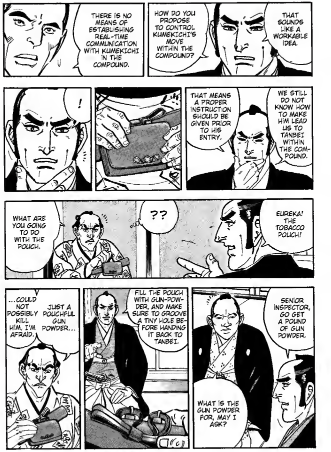
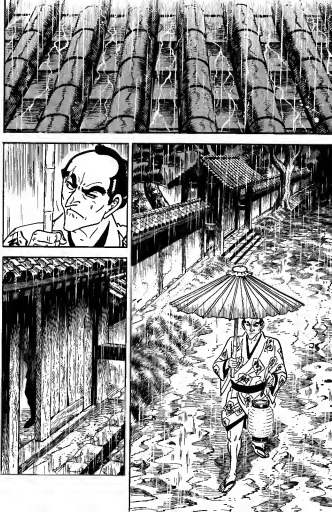
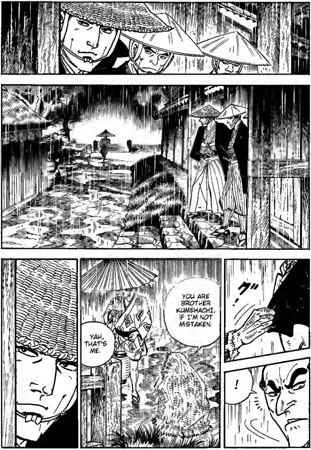
脇御本陣
JOB WELL DONE, KUME-HACHI.
I GUESS I WAS JUST LUCKY.


I JUST DID MY BEST UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
AS A RESULT...
...WE COULD NOT ONLY PIN DOWN THE NEST OF TANBEI...
...BUT ALSO COULD KEEP THE GANG UNDER OUR SURVEILLANCE.
IT WAS A GOOD THING THAT I HIRED YOU AS A COVERT DETECTIVE.
THANK YOU FOR THE GENEROUS WORDS.
HOWEVER, THE JOB IS NOT OVER YET. YOU ARE TO JOIN THE TANBEI GANG AT SIX THIS EVENING, RIGHT.
YES, IF I GO TO THE MIKURAYA NEST BRANDISHING THIS POUCH...
...THEY WOULD WELCOME ME.
THAT'S RIGHT!
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DO.
ALL RIGHT, BOSS!
I KNOW ON WHICH SIDE MY BREAD'S BUTTERED.


EXPLAIN TO ME ABOUT THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE ATTACK FORCE.
LET ME EXPLAIN USING THIS CHART.
MIKURAYA, THE GANG'S NEST IS ON THE RIVER OHKUBO...
...LOCATED SIDE-BY-SIDE ACROSS THE RIVER WITH THE RINNYU TEMPLE.
北
乙
甲
三倉や
橋
大久保川
林入寺
山門
本陣
東海道
WE WOULD SET UP A COMMAND CENTER AT THE TEMPLE TWO HOURS PRIOR TO THE ASSAULT...
...TO SEE HOW SOON THE GANG IS MOBILIZED AFTER KUMEHACHI HAS RE-JOINED THEM.
WHAT IF THE GANG TRIES TO ESCAPE SENSING A FOUL PLAY ON KUMEHACHI'S MOVE?
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO WORRY. SORES OF RIVER BOAT-MEN HAVE ALREADY BEEN DEPLOYED...
...HEADED BY INSPECTOR. TAKEUCHI IN ZONE "A" AND BY INSPECTOR KOYANAGI IN ZONE "B".


THAT SOUNDS LIKE A WORKABLE IDEA.
HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO CONTROL KUMEKICHI'S MOVE WITHIN THE COMPOUND?
THERE IS NO MEANS OF ESTABLISHING REAL-TIME COMMUNICATION WITH KUMEKICHI IN THE COMPOUND.
WE STILL DO NOT KNOW HOW TO MAKE HIM LEAD US TO TANBEI WITHIN THE COMPOUND.
THAT MEANS A PROPER INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE GIVEN PRIOR TO HIS ENTRY.
!
EUREKA! THE TOBACCO POUCH!
??
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THE POUCH.
SENIOR INSPECTOR, GO GET A POUND OF GUN POWDER.
WHAT IS THE GUN POWDER FOR, MAY I ASK?
FILL THE POUCH WITH GUN-POWDER, AND MAKE SURE TO GROOVE A TINY HOLE BEFORE HANDING IT BACK TO TANBEI.
JUST A POUCHFUL GUN POWDER...
...COULD NOT POSSIBLY KILL HIM, I'M AFRAID.




YOU ARE BROTHER KUMEHACHI, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN.
YAH, THAT'S ME.
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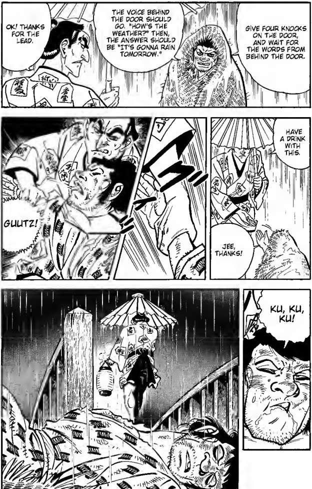
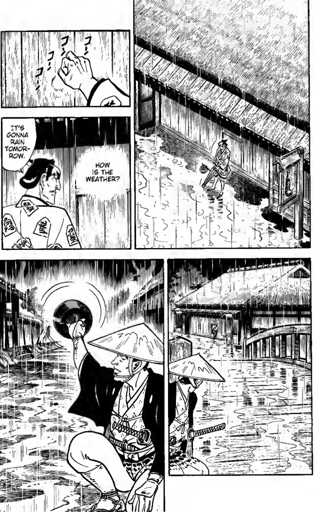

GIVE FOUR KNOCKS ON THE DOOR, AND WAIT FOR THE WORDS FROM BEHIND THE DOOR.
THE VOICE BEHIND THE DOOR SHOULD GO, "HOW'S THE WEATHER?" THEN, THE ANSWER SHOULD BE "IT'S GONNA RAIN TOMORROW."
OK! THANKS FOR THE LEAD.
HAVE A DRINK WITH THIS.
JEE, THANKS!
GUUTZ!
KU, KU, KU!



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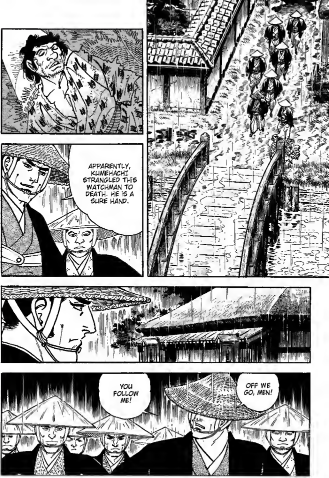
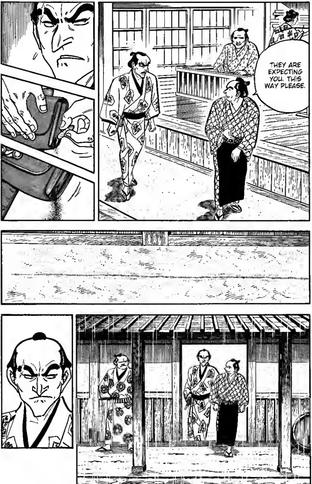
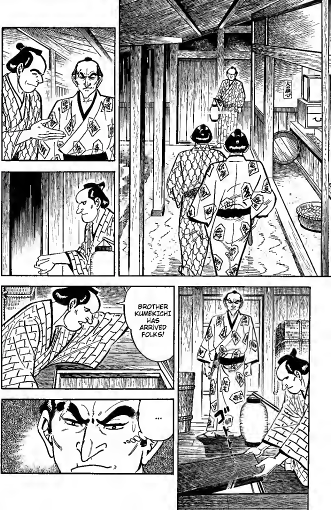
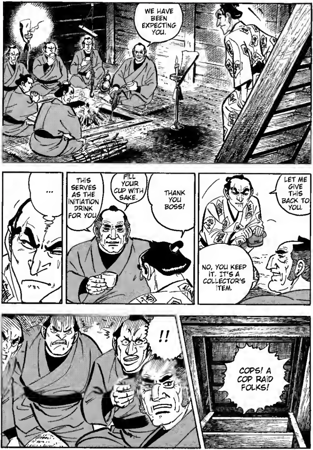
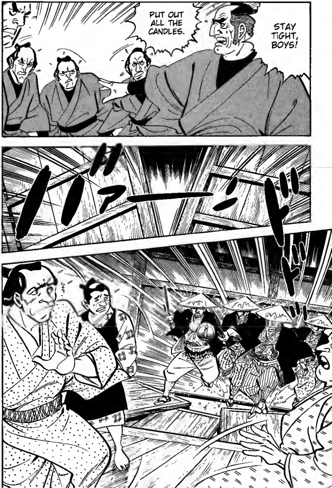
HOW IS THE WEATHER?
IT'S GONNA RAIN TOMORROW.


APPARENTLY, KUMEHACHI STRANGLED THIS WATCHMAN TO DEATH. HE IS A SURE HAND.
OFF WE GO, MEN!
YOU FOLLOW ME!


THEY ARE EXPECTING YOU. THIS WAY PLEASE.


火の用心
BROTHER KUMEKICHI HAS ARRIVED FOLKS!
ゴト…
...


WE HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
...
THIS SERVES AS THE INITIATION DRINK FOR YOU.
FILL YOUR CUP WITH SAKE.
THANK YOU BOSS!
LET ME GIVE THIS BACK TO YOU.
NO, YOU KEEP IT. IT'S A COLLECTOR'S ITEM.
!!
COPS! A COP RAID FOLKS!


STAY TIGHT, BOYS!
PUT OUT ALL THE CANDLES.
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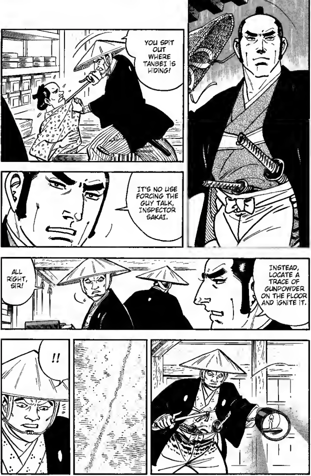
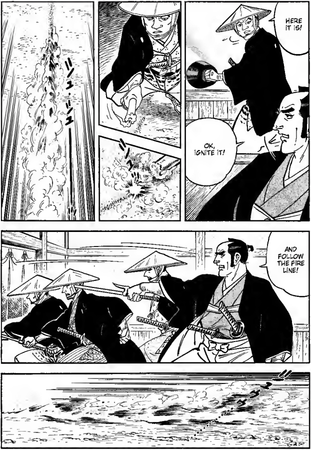
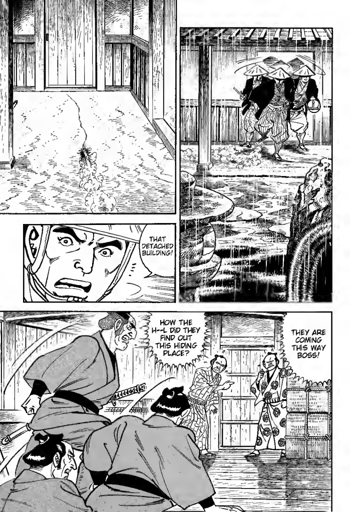
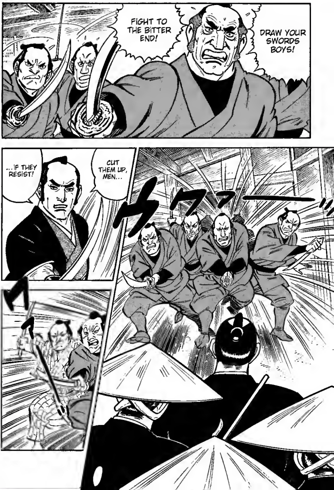
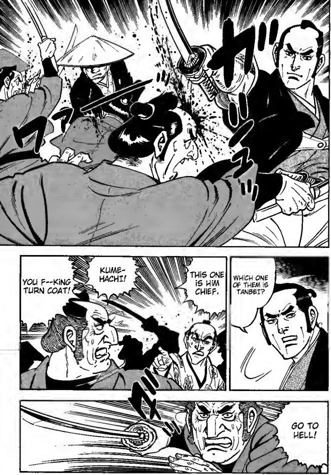

YOU SPIT OUT WHERE TANBEI IS HIDING!
IT'S NO USE FORCING THE GUY TALK, INSPECTOR SAKAI.
INSTEAD, LOCATE A TRACE OF GUNPOWDER ON THE FLOOR AND IGNITE IT.
ALL RIGHT, SIR!
!!


HERE IT IS!
OK, IGNITE IT!
AND FOLLOW THE FIRE LINE!


THAT DETACHED BUILDING!
THEY ARE COMING THIS WAY BOSS!
HOW THE H--L DID THEY FIND OUT THIS HIDING PLACE?


DRAW YOUR SWORDS BOYS!
FIGHT TO THE BITTER END!
CUT THEM UP, MEN...
...IF THEY RESIST!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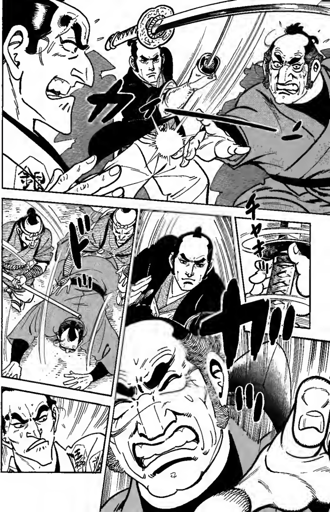
WHICH ONE OF THEM IS TANBEI?
THIS ONE IS HIM CHIEF.
KUME-HACHI!
YOU F--KING TURN COAT!
GO TO HELL!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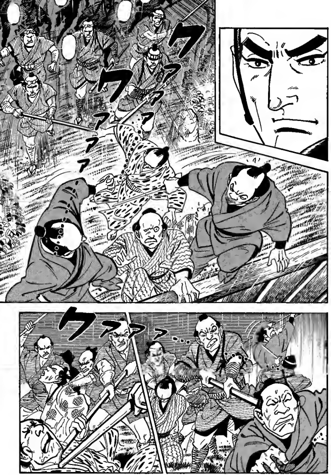
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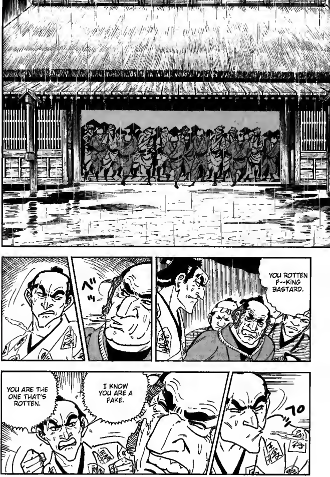
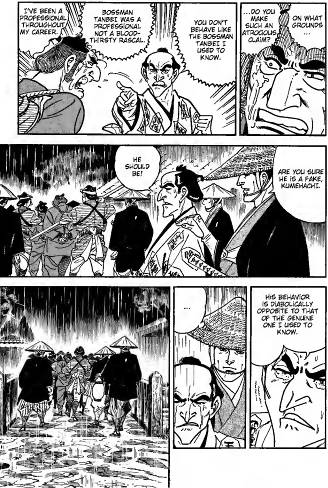
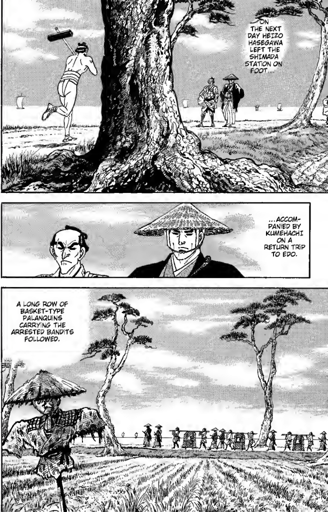
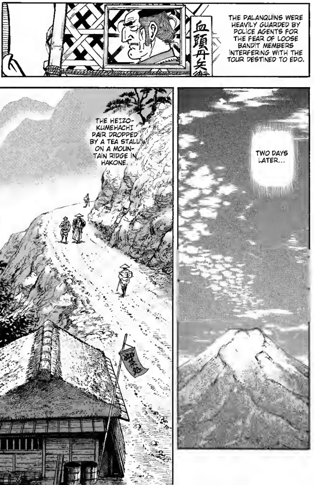
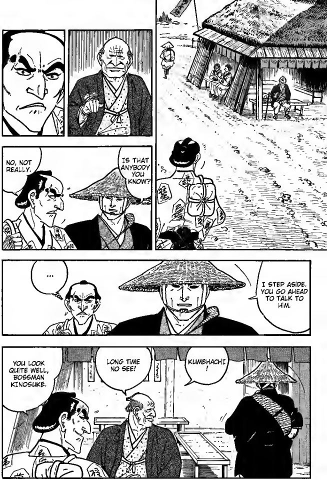
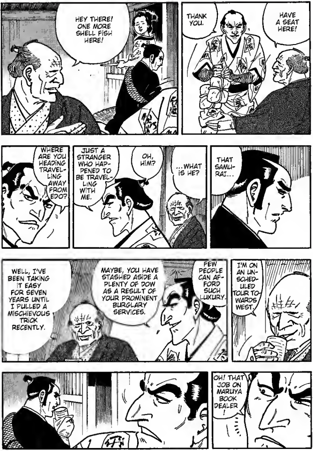

YOU ROTTEN F--KING BASTARD.
I KNOW YOU ARE A FAKE.
YOU ARE THE ONE THAT'S ROTTEN.

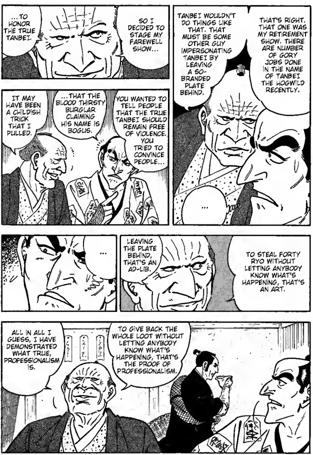

I'VE BEEN A PROFESSIONAL THROUGHOUT MY CAREER.
BOSSMAN TANBEI WAS A PROFESSIONAL NOT A BLOOD-THIRSTY RASCAL.
YOU DON'T BEHAVE LIKE THE BOSSMAN TANBEI I USED TO KNOW.
ON WHAT GROUNDS ...
...DO YOU MAKE SUCH AN ATROCIOUS CLAIM?
ARE YOU SURE HE IS A FAKE, KUMEHACHI.
HE SHOULD BE!
...
HIS BEHAVIOR IS DIABOLICALLY OPPOSITE TO THAT OF THE GENUINE ONE I USED TO KNOW.

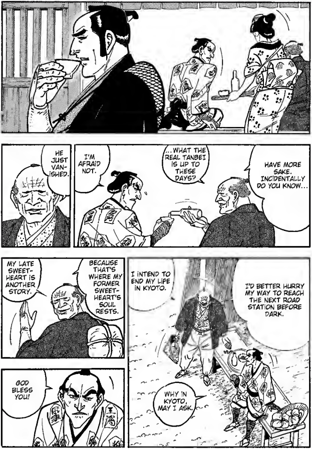

ON THE NEXT DAY HEIZO HASEGAWA LEFT THE SHIMADA STATION ON FOOT...
...ACCOMPANIED BY KUMEHACHI ON A RETURN TRIP TO EDO.
A LONG ROW OF BASKET-TYPE PALANQUINS CARRYING THE ARRESTED BANDITS FOLLOWED.

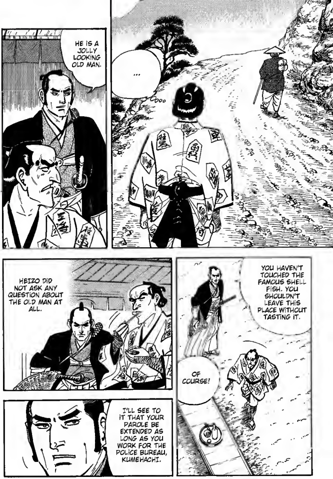

THE PALANQUINS WERE HEAVILY GUARDED BY POLICE AGENTS FOR THE FEAR OF LOOSE BANDIT MEMBERS INTERFERING WITH THE TOUR DESTINED TO EDO.
血頭丹兵衛
TWO DAYS LATER...
THE HEIZO-KUMEHACHI PAIR DROPPED BY A TEA STALL ON A MOUNTAIN RIDGE IN HAKONE.

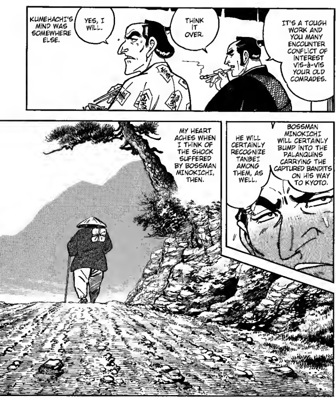

IS THAT ANYBODY YOU KNOW?
NO, NOT REALLY.
I STEP ASIDE. YOU GO AHEAD TO TALK TO HIM.
...
KUMEHACHI!
LONG TIME NO SEE!
YOU LOOK QUITE WELL, BOSSMAN KINOSUKE.


HAVE A SEAT HERE!
THANK YOU.
HEY THERE! ONE MORE SHELL FISH HERE!
THAT SAMURAI...
...WHAT IS HE?
OH, HIM?
JUST A STRANGER WHO HAPPENED TO BE TRAVELLING WITH ME.
WHERE ARE YOU HEADING TRAVELLING AWAY FROM EDO?
I'M ON AN UNSCHEDULED TOUR TOWARDS WEST.
FEW PEOPLE CAN AFFORD SUCH LUXURY.
MAYBE, YOU HAVE STASHED ASIDE A PLENTY OF DOW AS A RESULT OF YOUR PROMINENT BURGLARY SERVICES.
WELL, I'VE BEEN TAKING IT EASY FOR SEVEN YEARS UNTIL I PULLED A MISCHIEVOUS TRICK RECENTLY.
OH! THAT JOB ON MARUYA BOOK DEALER!


TANBEI WOULDN'T DO THINGS LIKE THAT. THAT MUST BE SOME OTHER GUY IMPERSONATING TANBEI BY LEAVING A SO-BRANDED PLATE BEHIND.
THAT'S RIGHT. THAT ONE WAS MY RETIREMENT SHOW. THERE ARE NUMBER OF GORY JOBS DONE IN THE NAME OF TANBEI THE HOGWILD RECENTLY.
SO I DECIDED TO STAGE MY FAREWELL SHOW...
...TO HONOR THE TRUE TANBEI.
YOU WANTED TO TELL PEOPLE THAT THE TRUE TANBEI SHOULD REMAIN FREE OF VIOLENCE. YOU TRIED TO CONVINCE PEOPLE...
...THAT THE BLOOD THIRSTY BURGLAR CLAIMING HIS NAME IS BOGUS.
IT MAY HAVE BEEN A CHILDISH TRICK THAT I PULLED.
...
...
TO STEAL FORTY RYO WITHOUT LETTING ANYBODY KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING, THAT'S AN ART.
LEAVING THE PLATE BEHIND, THAT'S AN AD-LIB.
TO GIVE BACK THE WHOLE LOOT WITHOUT LETTING ANYBODY KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING, THAT'S THE PROOF OF PROFESSIONALISM.
ALL IN ALL I GUESS, I HAVE DEMONSTRATED WHAT TRUE, PROFESSIONALISM IS.

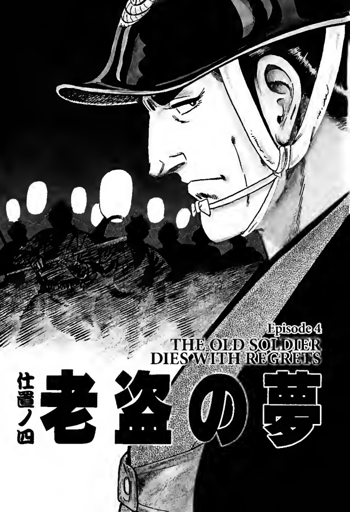

HAVE MORE SAKE. INCIDENTALLY DO YOU KNOW...
...WHAT THE REAL TANBEI IS UP TO THESE DAYS?
I'M AFRAID NOT.
HE JUST VANISHED.
I'D BETTER HURRY MY WAY TO REACH THE NEXT ROAD STATION BEFORE DARK.
I INTEND TO END MY LIFE IN KYOTO.
WHY IN KYOTO, MAY I ASK.
BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE MY FORMER SWEETHEART'S SOUL RESTS.
MY LATE SWEETHEART IS ANOTHER STORY.
GOD BLESS YOU!


HE IS A JOLLY LOOKING OLD MAN.
...
HEIZO DID NOT ASK ANY QUESTION ABOUT THE OLD MAN AT ALL.
YOU HAVEN'T TOUCHED THE FAMOUS SHELL FISH. YOU SHOULDN'T LEAVE THIS PLACE WITHOUT TASTING IT.
OF COURSE!
I'LL SEE TO IT THAT YOUR PAROLE BE EXTENDED AS LONG AS YOU WORK FOR THE POLICE BUREAU, KUMEHACHI.


IT'S A TOUGH WORK AND YOU MANY ENCOUNTER CONFLICT OF INTEREST VIS-À-VIS YOUR OLD COMRADES.
THINK IT OVER.
YES, I WILL.
KUMEHACHI'S MIND WAS SOMEWHERE ELSE.
BOSSMAN MINOKICHI WILL CERTAINLY BUMP INTO THE PALANQUINS CARRYING THE CAPTURED BANDITS ON HIS WAY TO KYOTO.
HE WILL CERTAINLY RECOGNIZE TANBEI AMONG THEM, AS WELL.
MY HEART ACHES WHEN I THINK OF THE SHOCK SUFFERED BY BOSSMAN MINOKICHI, THEN.

END

火付盗賊改

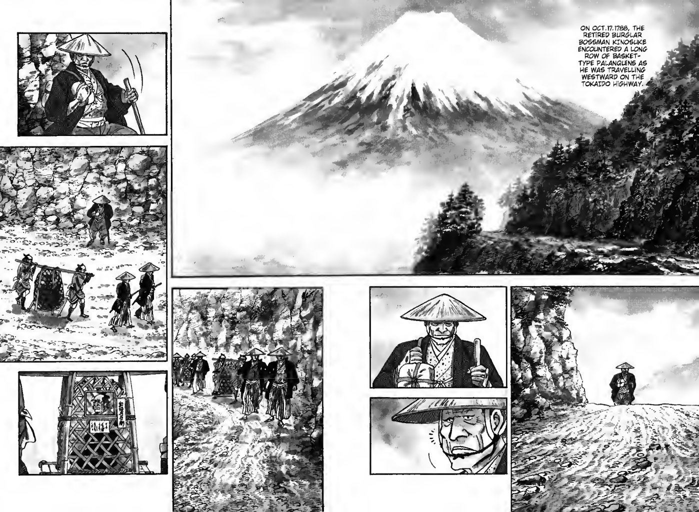


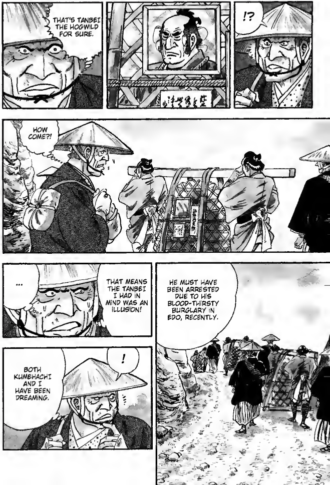
Episode 4

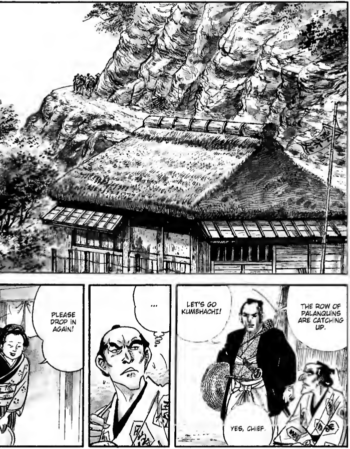
THE OLD SOLDIER DIES WITH REGRETS

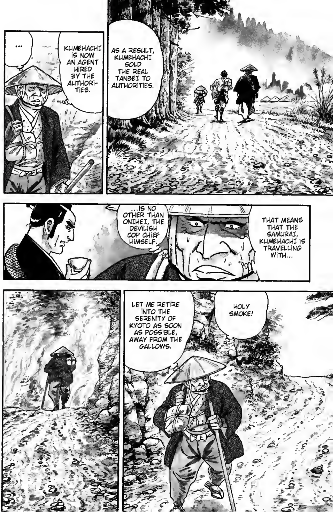
仕置ノ四

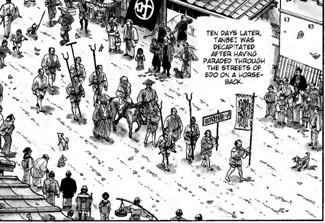
老盗の夢

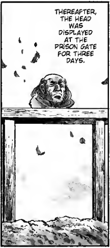

ON OCT.17.1788, THE RETIRED BURGLAR BOSSMAN KINOSUKE ENCOUNTERED A LONG ROW OF BASKET-TYPE PALANQUINS AS HE WAS TRAVELLING WESTWARD ON THE TOKAIDO HIGHWAY.

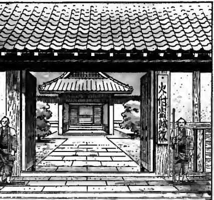

THAT'S TANBEI THE HOGWILD FOR SURE.
!?
HOW COME?!
...
THAT MEANS THE TANBEI I HAD IN MIND WAS AN ILLUSION!
HE MUST HAVE BEEN ARRESTED DUE TO HIS BLOOD-THIRSTY BURGLARY IN EDO, RECENTLY.
BOTH KUMEHACHI AND I HAVE BEEN DREAMING.
!

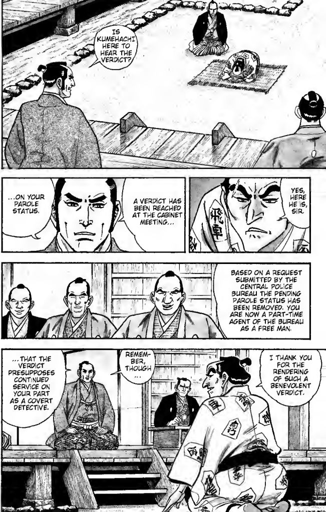

THE ROW OF PALANQUINS ARE CATCHING UP.
LET'S GO KUMEHACHI!
YES, CHIEF.
...
PLEASE DROP IN AGAIN!

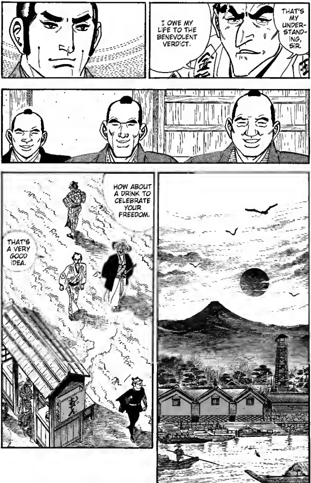

AS A RESULT, KUMEHACHI SOLD THE REAL TANBEI TO AUTHORITIES.
KUMEHACHI IS NOW AN AGENT HIRED BY THE AUTHORITIES.
...
THAT MEANS THAT THE SAMURAI, KUMEHACHI IS TRAVELLING WITH...
...IS NO OTHER THAN ONIHEI, THE DEVILISH COP CHIEF HIMSELF.
HOLY SMOKE!
LET ME RETIRE INTO THE SERENITY OF KYOTO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AWAY FROM THE GALLOWS.

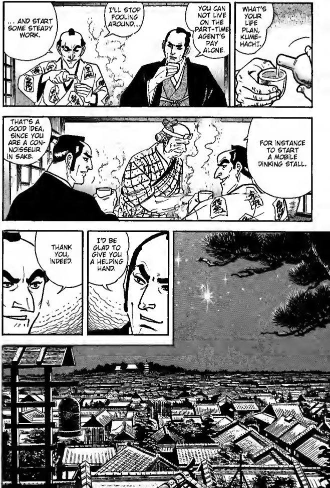

TEN DAYS LATER, TANBEI WAS DECAPITATED AFTER HAVING PARADED THROUGH THE STREETS OF EDO ON A HORSE-BACK.

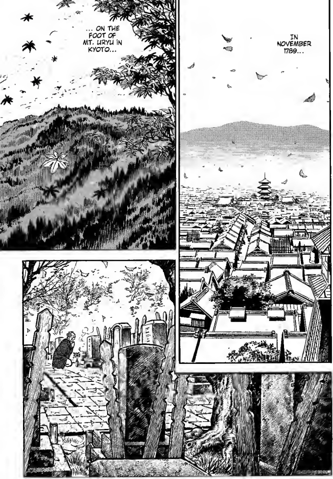

THEREAFTER, THE HEAD WAS DISPLAYED AT THE PRISON GATE FOR THREE DAYS.

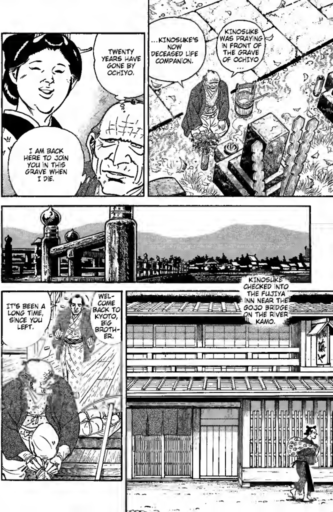

火付盗賊改

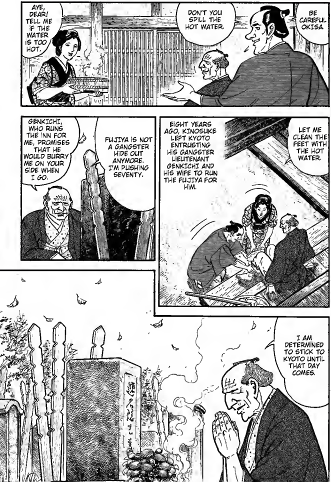

IS KUMEHACHI HERE TO HEAR THE VERDICT?
YES, HERE HE IS, SIR.
A VERDICT HAS BEEN REACHED AT THE CABINET MEETING...
...ON YOUR PAROLE STATUS.
BASED ON A REQUEST SUBMITTED BY THE CENTRAL POLICE BUREAU THE PENDING PAROLE STATUS HAS BEEN REMOVED. YOU ARE NOW A PART-TIME AGENT OF THE BUREAU AS A FREE MAN.
I THANK YOU FOR THE RENDERING OF SUCH A BENEVOLENT VERDICT.
REMEMBER, THOUGH...
...THAT THE VERDICT PRESUPPOSES CONTINUED SERVICE ON YOUR PART AS A COVERT DETECTIVE.

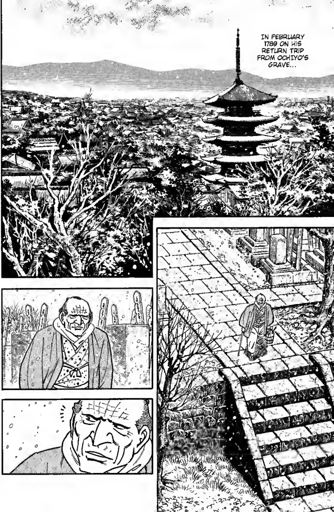

I OWE MY LIFE TO THE BENEVOLENT VERDICT.
THAT'S MY UNDERSTANDING, SIR.
HOW ABOUT A DRINK TO CELEBRATE YOUR FREEDOM.
THAT'S A VERY GOOD IDEA.

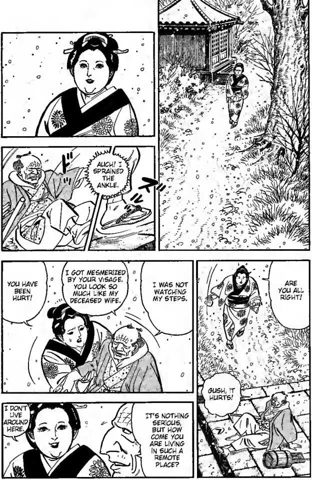

WHAT'S YOUR LIFE PLAN, KUMEHACHI.
YOU CAN NOT LIVE ON THE PART-TIME AGENT'S PAY ALONE.
I'LL STOP FOOLING AROUND...
... AND START SOME STEADY WORK.
FOR INSTANCE TO START A MOBILE DINKING STALL.
THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, SINCE YOU ARE A CONNOISSEUR IN SAKE.
I'D BE GLAD TO GIVE YOU A HELPING HAND.
THANK YOU, INDEED.

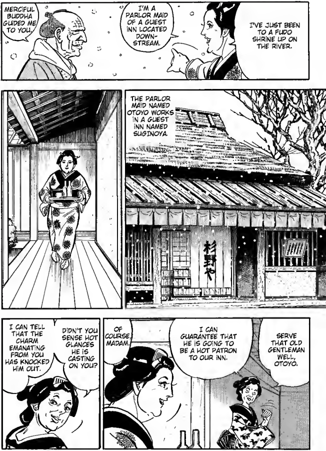

IN NOVEMBER 1789...
... ON THE FOOT OF MT. URYU IN KYOTO...

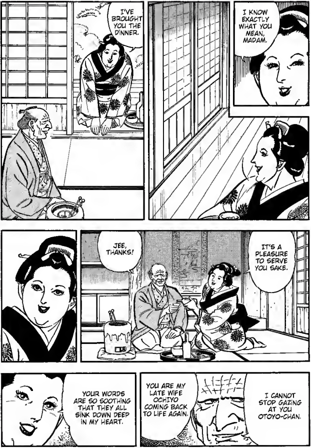

KINOSUKE WAS PRAYING IN FRONT OF THE GRAVE OF OCHIYO ...
...KINOSUKE'S NOW DECEASED LIFE COMPANION.
TWENTY YEARS HAVE GONE BY OCHIYO.
I AM BACK HERE TO JOIN YOU IN THIS GRAVE WHEN I DIE.
KINOSUKE CHECKED INTO THE FUJIYA INN NEAR THE GOJO BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KAMO.
WELCOME BACK TO KYOTO, BIG BROTHER.
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, SINCE YOU LEFT.

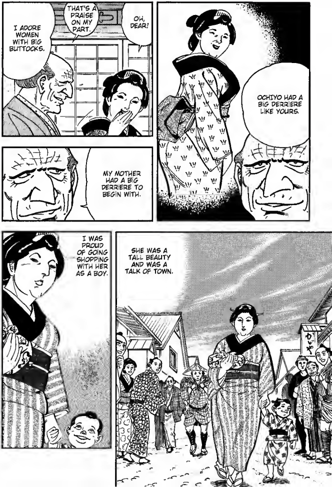

BE CAREFUL OKISA
DON'T YOU SPILL THE HOT WATER.
AYE, DEAR! TELL ME IF THE WATER IS TOO HOT.
LET ME CLEAN THE FEET WITH THE HOT WATER.
EIGHT YEARS AGO, KINOSUKE LEFT KYOTO ENTRUSTING HIS GANGSTER LIEUTENANT GENKICHI AND HIS WIFE TO RUN THE FUJIYA FOR HIM.
FUJIYA IS NOT A GANGSTER HIDE OUT ANYMORE. I'M PUSHING SEVENTY.
GENKICHI, WHO RUNS THE INN FOR ME, PROMISES THAT HE WOULD BURRY ME ON YOUR SIDE WHEN I GO.
I AM DETERMINED TO STICK TO KYOTO UNTIL THAT DAY COMES.

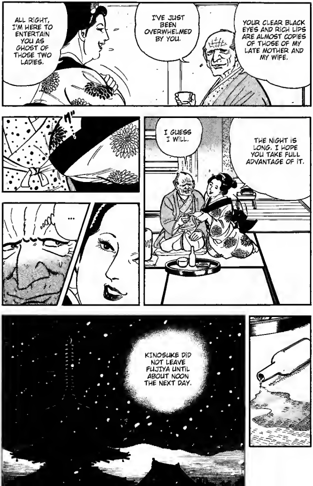

IN FEBRUARY 1789 ON HIS RETURN TRIP FROM OCHIYO'S GRAVE...

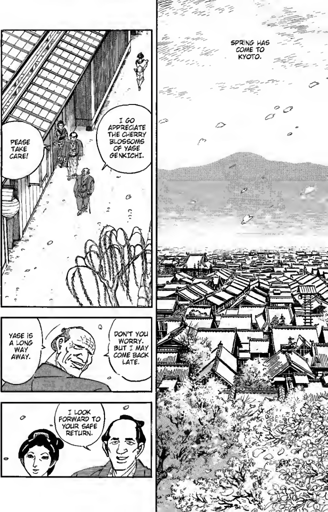

AUCH! I SPRAINED THE ANKLE.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!
GUSH, IT HURTS!
YOU HAVE BEEN HURT!
I GOT MESMERIZED BY YOUR VISAGE. YOU LOOK SO MUCH LIKE MY DECEASED WIFE.
I WAS NOT WATCHING MY STEPS.
IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS, BUT HOW COME YOU ARE LIVING IN SUCH A REMOTE PLACE?
I DON'T LIVE AROUND HERE.

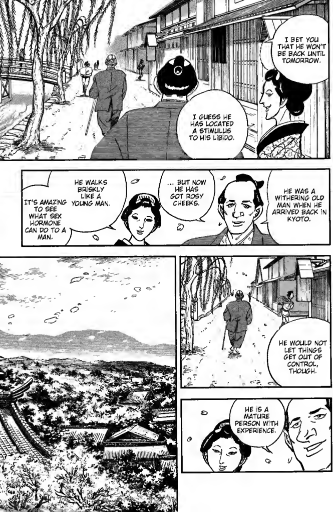

MERCIFUL BUDDHA GUIDED ME TO YOU.
I'M A PARLOR MAID OF A GUEST INN LOCATED DOWN-STREAM.
I'VE JUST BEEN TO A FUDO SHRINE UP ON THE RIVER.
THE PARLOR MAID NAMED OTOYO WORKS IN A GUEST INN NAMED SUGINOYA.
杉野や
I CAN TELL THAT THE CHARM EMANATING FROM YOU HAS KNOCKED HIM OUT.
DIDN'T YOU SENSE HOT GLANCES HE IS CASTING ON YOU?
OF COURSE, MADAM.
I CAN GUARANTEE THAT HE IS GOING TO BE A HOT PATRON TO OUR INN.
SERVE THAT OLD GENTLEMAN WELL, OTOYO.

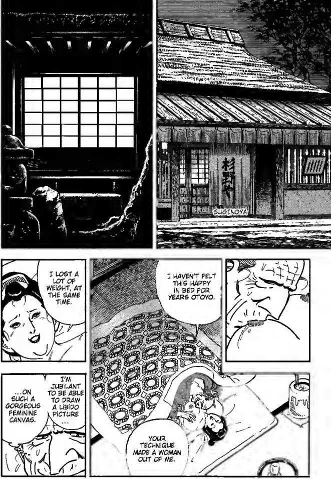

I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU MEAN, MADAM.
I'VE BROUGHT YOU THE DINNER.
IT'S A PLEASURE TO SERVE YOU SAKE.
JEE, THANKS!
I CANNOT STOP GAZING AT YOU OTOYO-CHAN.
YOU ARE MY LATE WIFE OCHIYO COMING BACK TO LIFE AGAIN.
YOUR WORDS ARE SO SOOTHING THAT THEY ALL SINK DOWN DEEP IN MY HEART.

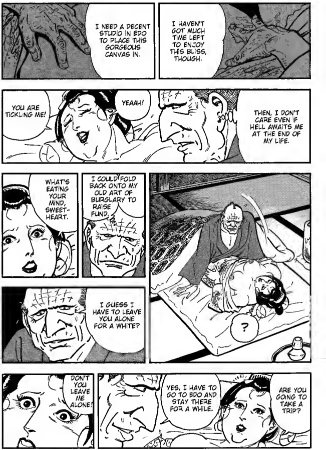

I ADORE WOMEN WITH BIG BUTTOCKS.
THAT'S A PRAISE ON MY PART.
OH, DEAR!
OCHIYO HAD A BIG DERRIERE LIKE YOURS.
MY MOTHER HAD A BIG DERRIERE TO BEGIN WITH.
I WAS PROUD OF GOING SHOPPING WITH HER AS A BOY.
SHE WAS A TALL BEAUTY AND WAS A TALK OF TOWN.
かじや

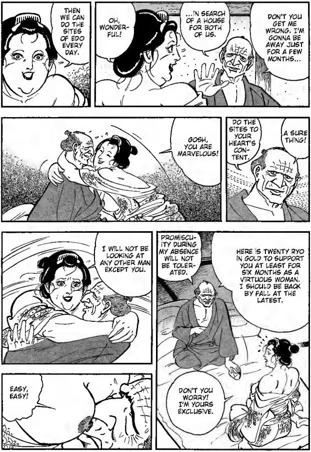

YOUR CLEAR BLACK EYES AND RICH LIPS ARE ALMOST COPIES OF THOSE OF MY LATE MOTHER AND MY WIFE.
I'VE JUST BEEN OVERWHELMED BY YOU.
ALL RIGHT, I'M HERE TO ENTERTAIN YOU AS GHOST OF THOSE TWO LADIES.
グ
THE NIGHT IS LONG, I HOPE YOU TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF IT.
I GUESS I WILL.
...
KINOSUKE DID NOT LEAVE FUJIYA UNTIL ABOUT NOON THE NEXT DAY.

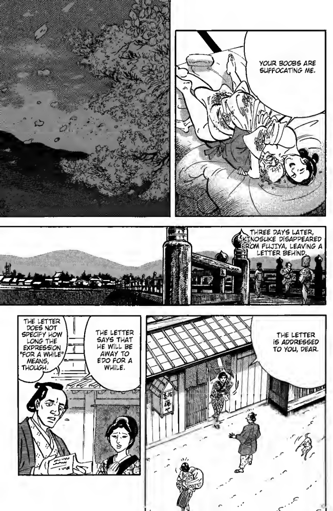

SPRING HAS COME TO KYOTO.
I GO APPRECIATE THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS OF YASE GENKICHI.
PEASE TAKE CARE!
YASE IS A LONG WAY AWAY.
DON'T YOU WORRY. BUT I MAY COME BACK LATE.
I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR SAFE RETURN.

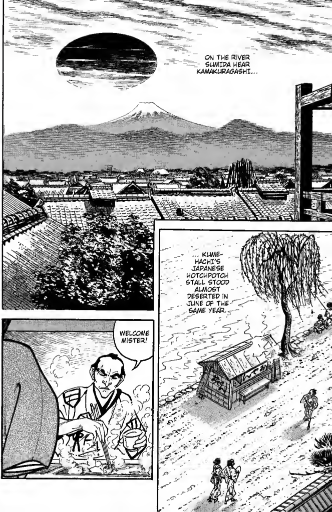

I BET YOU THAT HE WON'T BE BACK UNTIL TOMORROW.
I GUESS HE HAS LOCATED A STIMULUS TO HIS LIBIDO.
HE WAS A WITHERING OLD MAN WHEN HE ARRIVED BACK IN KYOTO.
... BUT NOW HE HAS GOT ROSY CHEEKS.
HE WALKS BRISKLY LIKE A YOUNG MAN.
IT'S AMAZING TO SEE WHAT SEX HORMONE CAN DO TO A MAN.
HE WOULD NOT LET THINGS GET OUT OF CONTROL, THOUGH.
HE IS A MATURE PERSON WITH EXPERIENCE.

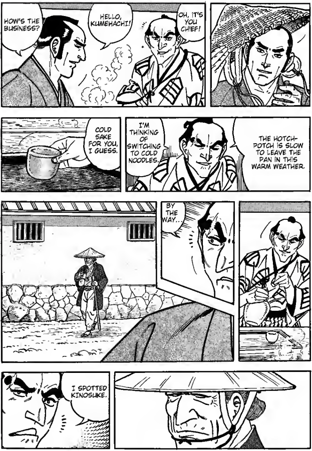

SUGINOYA
I HAVEN'T FELT THIS HAPPY IN BED FOR YEARS OTOYO.
I LOST A LOT OF WEIGHT, AT THE SAME TIME.
YOUR TECHNIQUE MADE A WOMAN OUT OF ME.
I'M JUBILANT TO BE ABLE TO DRAW A LIBIDO PICTURE …
…ON SUCH A GORGEOUS FEMININE CANVAS.

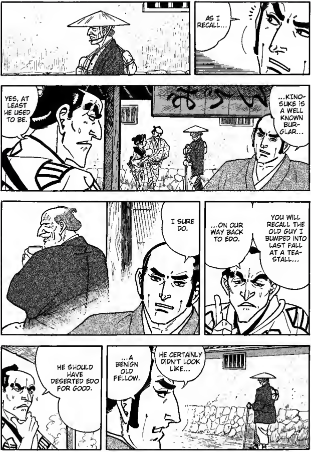

I HAVEN'T GOT MUCH TIME LEFT TO ENJOY THIS BLISS, THOUGH.
I NEED A DECENT STUDIO IN EDO TO PLACE THIS GORGEOUS CANVAS IN.
THEN, I DON'T CARE EVEN IF HELL AWAITS ME AT THE END OF MY LIFE.
YEAAH!
YOU ARE TICKLING ME!
?
I COULD FOLD BACK ONTO MY OLD ART OF BURGLARY TO RAISE FUND.
WHAT'S EATING YOUR MIND, SWEET-HEART.
I GUESS I HAVE TO LEAVE YOU ALONE FOR A WHITE?
ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE A TRIP?
YES, I HAVE TO GO TO EDO AND STAY THERE FOR A WHILE.
DON'T YOU LEAVE ME ALONE!

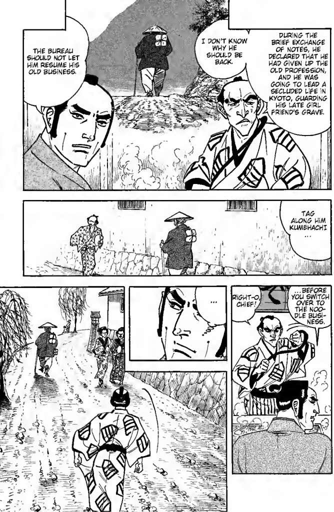

DON'T YOU GET ME WRONG. I'M GONNA BE AWAY JUST FOR A FEW MONTHS...
...IN SEARCH OF A HOUSE FOR BOTH OF US.
OH, WONDERFUL!
THEN WE CAN DO THE SITES OF EDO EVERY DAY.
A SURE THING!
DO THE SITES TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT.
GOSH, YOU ARE MARVELOUS!
HERE IS TWENTY RYO IN GOLD TO SUPPORT YOU AT LEAST FOR SIX MONTHS AS A VIRTUOUS WOMAN. I SHOULD BE BACK BY FALL AT THE LATEST.
PROMISCUITY DURING MY ABSENCE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
DON'T YOU WORRY! I'M YOURS EXCLUSIVE.
I WILL NOT BE LOOKING AT ANY OTHER MAN EXCEPT YOU.
EASY, EASY!

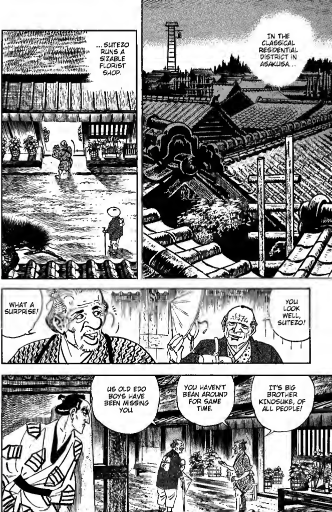

YOUR BOOBS ARE SUFFOCATING ME.
THREE DAYS LATER, KINOSUKE DISAPPEARED FROM FUJIYA, LEAVING A LETTER BEHIND.
THE LETTER IS ADDRESSED TO YOU, DEAR.
THE LETTER SAYS THAT HE WILL BE AWAY TO EDO FOR A WHILE.
THE LETTER DOES NOT SPECIFY HOW LONG THE EXPRESSION "FOR A WHILE" MEANS, THOUGH.

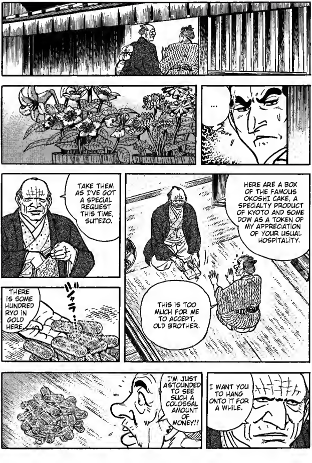

ON THE RIVER SUMIDA HEAR KAMAKURAGASHI...
... KUME-HACHI'S JAPANESE HOTCHPOTCH STALL STOOD ALMOST DESERTED IN JUNE OF THE SAME YEAR.
WELCOME MISTER!

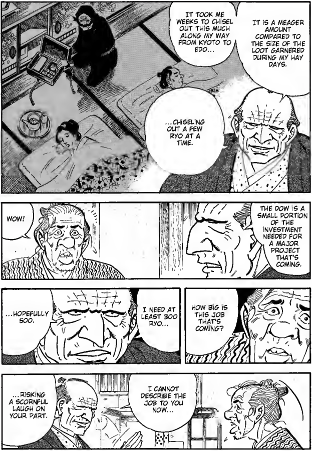

HOW'S THE BUSINESS?
HELLO, KUMEHACHI!
OH, IT'S YOU CHIEF!
COLD SAKE FOR YOU, I GUESS.
I'M THINKING OF SWITCHING TO COLD NOODLES.
THE HOTCHPOTCH IS SLOW TO LEAVE THE PAN IN THIS WARM WEATHER.
BY THE WAY...
I SPOTTED KINOSUKE.

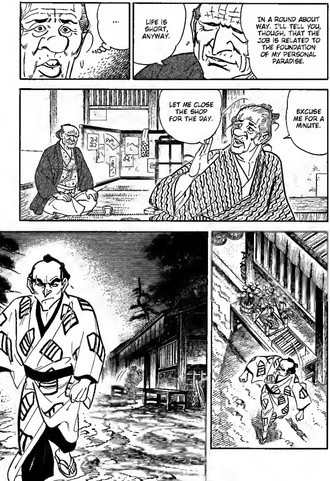

AS I RECALL...
...KINOSUKE IS A WELL KNOWN BURGLAR...
YES, AT LEAST HE USED TO BE.
YOU WILL RECALL THE OLD GUY I BUMPED INTO LAST FALL AT A TEA-STALL...
...ON OUR WAY BACK TO EDO.
I SURE DO.
HE CERTAINLY DIDN'T LOOK LIKE...
...A BENIGN OLD FELLOW.
HE SHOULD HAVE DESERTED EDO FOR GOOD.

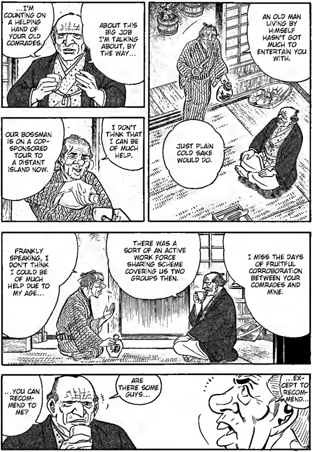

THE BUREAU SHOULD NOT LET HIM RESUME HIS OLD BUSINESS.
I DON'T KNOW WHY HE SHOULD BE BACK.
DURING THE BRIEF EXCHANGE OF NOTES, HE DECLARED THAT HE HAD GIVEN UP THE OLD PROFESSION, AND HE WAS GOING TO LEAD A SECLUDED LIFE IN KYOTO, GUARDING HIS LATE GIRL FRIEND'S GRAVE.
TAG ALONG HIM KUMEHACHI ...
...
RIGHT-O, CHIEF!
...BEFORE YOU SWITCH OVER TO THE NOODLE BUSINESS.

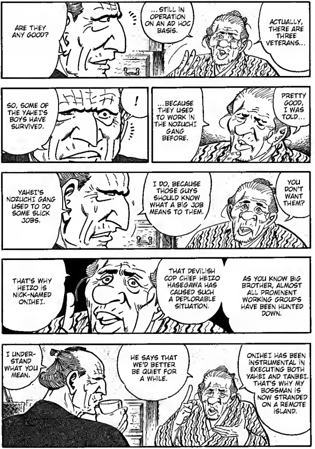

IN THE CLASSICAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT IN ASAKUSA...
...SUTEZO RUNS A SIZABLE FLORIST SHOP.
YOU LOOK WELL, SUTEZO!
WHAT A SURPRISE!
IT'S BIG BROTHER KINOSUKE, OF ALL PEOPLE!
YOU HAVEN'T BEAN AROUND FOR SAME TIME.
US OLD EDO BOYS HAVE BEEN MISSING YOU.

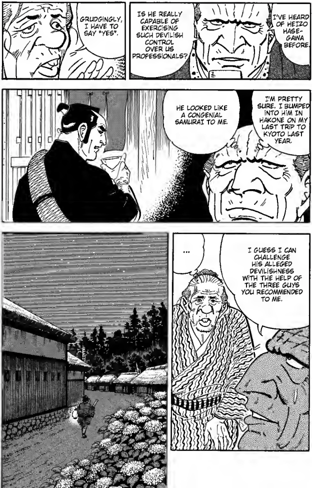

...
HERE ARE A BOX OF THE FAMOUS OKOSHI CAKE, A SPECIALTY PRODUCT OF KYOTO AND SOME DOW AS A TOKEN OF MY APPRECIATION OF YOUR USUAL HOSPITALITY.
THIS IS TOO MUCH FOR ME TO ACCEPT, OLD BROTHER.
TAKE THEM AS I'VE GOT A SPECIAL REQUEST THIS TIME, SUTEZO.
ジャラ…
THERE IS SOME HUNDRED RYO IN GOLD HERE.
I WANT YOU TO HANG ONTO IT FOR A WHILE.
I'M JUST ASTOUNDED TO SEE SUCH A COLOSSAL AMOUNT OF MONEY!!

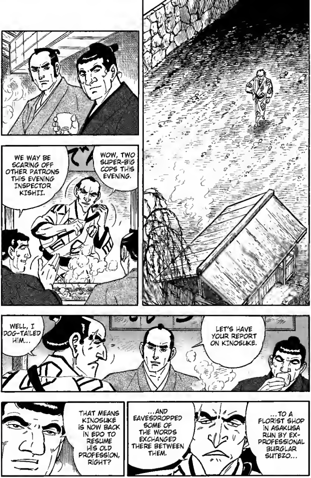

IT IS A MEAGER AMOUNT COMPARED TO THE SIZE OF THE LOOT GARNERED DURING MY HAY DAYS.
IT TOOK ME WEEKS TO CHISEL OUT THIS MUCH ALONG MY WAY FROM KYOTO TO EDO...
...CHISELING OUT A FEW RYO AT A TIME.
THE DOW IS A SMALL PORTION OF THE INVESTMENT NEEDED FOR A MAJOR PROJECT THAT'S COMING.
WOW!
HOW BIG IS THIS JOB THAT'S COMING?
I NEED AT LEAST 300 RYO...
...HOPEFULLY 500.
I CANNOT DESCRIBE THE JOB TO YOU NOW...
...RISKING A SCORNFUL LAUGH ON YOUR PART.

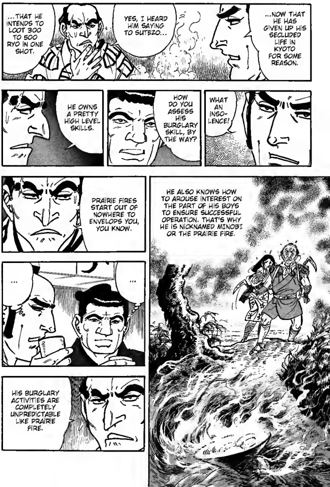

IN A ROUND ABOUT WAY. I'LL TELL YOU, THOUGH, THAT THE JOB IS RELATED TO THE FOUNDATION OF MY PERSONAL PARADISE.
LIFE IS SHORT, ANYWAY.
...
EXCUSE ME FOR A MINUTE.
LET ME CLOSE THE SHOP FOR THE DAY.

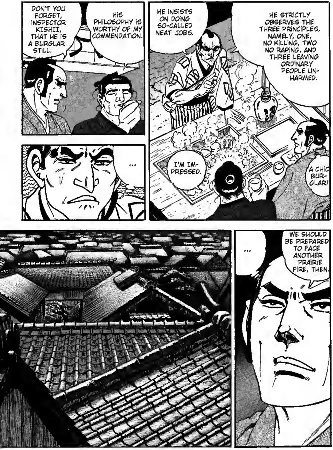

AN OLD MAN LIVING BY HIMSELF HASN'T GOT MUCH TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH.
JUST PLAIN COLD SAKE WOULD DO.
ABOUT THIS BIG JOB I'M TALKING ABOUT, BY THE WAY...
...I'M COUNTING ON A HELPING HAND OF YOUR OLD COMRADES.
I DON'T THINK THAT I CAN BE OF MUCH HELP.
OUR BOSSMAN IS ON A COP-SPONSORED TOUR TO A DISTANT ISLAND NOW.
I MISS THE DAYS OF FRUITFUL CORROBORATION BETWEEN YOUR COMRADES AND MINE.
THERE WAS A SORT OF AN ACTIVE WORK FORCE SHARING SCHEME COVERING US TWO GROUPS THEN.
FRANKLY SPEAKING, I DON'T THINK I COULD BE OF MUCH HELP DUE TO MY AGE...
...EXCEPT TO RECOMMEND...
ARE THERE SOME GUYS...
...YOU CAN RECOMMEND TO ME?

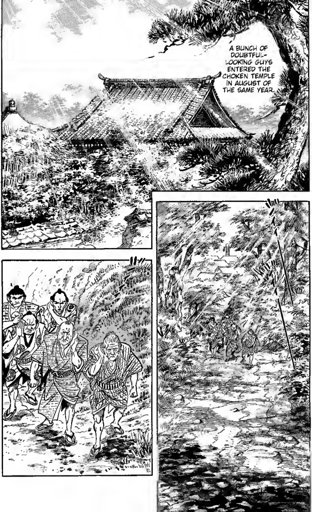

ACTUALLY, THERE ARE THREE VETERANS...
...STILL IN OPERATION ON AN AD HOC BASIS.
ARE THEY ANY GOOD?
PRETTY GOOD, I WAS TOLD...
...BECAUSE THEY USED TO WORK IN THE NOZUCHI GANG BEFORE.
!
SO, SOME OF THE YAHEI'S BOYS HAVE SURVIVED.
YOU DON'T WANT THEM?
I DO, BECAUSE THOSE GUYS SHOULD KNOW WHAT A BIG JOB MEANS TO THEM.
YAHEI'S NOZUCHI GANG USED TO DO SOME SLICK JOBS.
AS YOU KNOW BIG BROTHER, ALMOST ALL PROMINENT WORKING GROUPS HAVE BEEN HUNTED DOWN.
THAT DEVILISH COP CHIEF HEIZO HASEGAWA HAS CAUSED SUCH A DEPLORABLE SITUATION.
THAT'S WHY HEIZO IS NICK-NAMED ONIHEI.
ONIHEI HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN EXECUTING BOTH YAHEI AND TANBEI. THAT'S WHY MY BOSSMAN IS NOW STRANDED ON A REMOTE ISLAND.
HE SAYS THAT WE'D BETTER BE QUIET FOR A WHILE.
I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU MEAN.

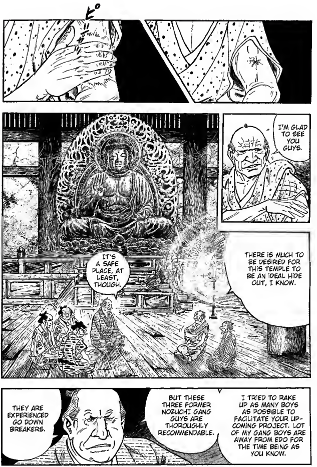

I'VE HEARD OF HEIZO HASEGAWA BEFORE.
IS HE REALLY CAPABLE OF EXERCISING SUCH DEVILISH CONTROL OVER US PROFESSIONALS?
GRUDGINGLY, I HAVE TO SAY "YES".
I'M PRETTY SURE. I BUMPED INTO HIM IN HAKONE ON MY LAST TRIP TO KYOTO LAST YEAR.
HE LOOKED LIKE A CONGENIAL SAMURAI TO ME.
I GUESS I CAN CHALLENGE HIS ALLEGED DEVILISHNESS WITH THE HELP OF THE THREE GUYS YOU RECOMMENDED TO ME.
...

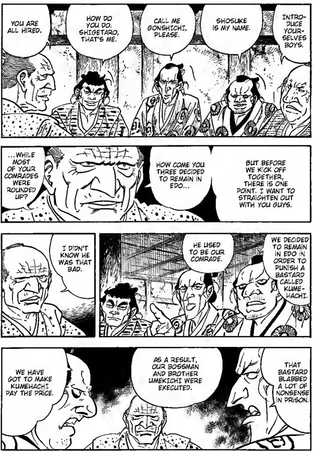

WOW, TWO SUPER-BIG COPS THIS EVENING.
WE WAY BE SCARING OFF OTHER PATRONS THIS EVENING INSPECTOR KISHII.
LET'S HAVE YOUR REPORT ON KINOSUKE.
WELL, I DOG-TAILED HIM...
...TO A FLORIST SHOP IN ASAKUSA RUN BY EX-PROFESSIONAL BURGLAR SUTEZO...
...AND EAVESDROPPED SOME OF THE WORDS EXCHANGED THERE BETWEEN THEM.
THAT MEANS KINOSUKE IS NOW BACK IN EDO TO RESUME HIS OLD PROFESSION, RIGHT?

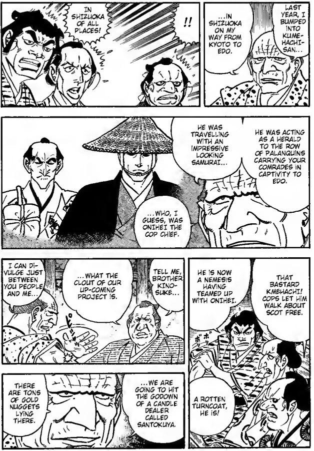

...NOW THAT HE HAS GIVEN UP HIS SECLUDED LIFE IN KYOTO FOR SOME REASON.
YES, I HEARD HIM SAYING TO SUTEZO...
...THAT HE INTENDS TO LOOT 300 TO 500 RYO IN ONE SHOT.
WHAT AN INSOLENCE!
HOW DO YOU ASSESS HIS BURGLARY SKILL, BY THE WAY?
HE OWNS A PRETTY HIGH LEVEL SKILLS.
PRAIRIE FIRES START OUT OF NOWHERE TO ENVELOPS YOU, YOU KNOW.
...
...
HIS BURGLARY ACTIVITIES ARE COMPLETELY UNPREDICTABLE LIKE PRAIRIE FIRE.
HE ALSO KNOWS HOW TO AROUSE INTEREST ON THE PART OF HIS BOYS TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION. THAT'S WHY HE IS NICKNAMED MINOBI OR THE PRAIRIE FIRE.

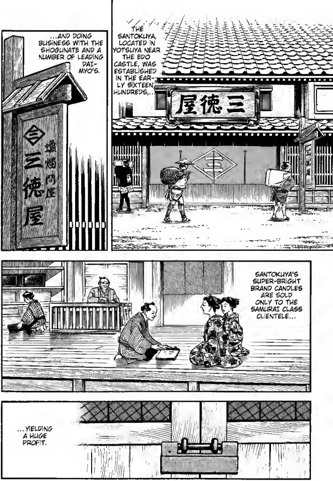

HE STRICTLY OBSERVES THE THREE PRINCIPLES, NAMELY, ONE, NO KILLING, TWO NO RAPING, AND THREE LEAVING ORDINARY PEOPLE UNHARMED.
HE INSISTS ON DOING SO-CALLED NEAT JOBS.
A CHIC BURGLAR!
I'M IMPRESSED.
HIS PHILOSOPHY IS WORTHY OF MY COMMENDATION.
DON'T YOU FORGET, INSPECTOR KISHII, THAT HE IS A BURGLAR STILL.
...
WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO FACE ANOTHER PRAIRIE FIRE, THEN.
...

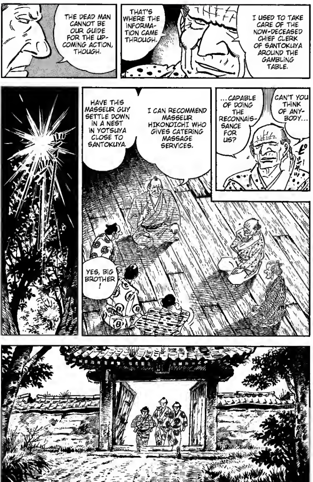

A BUNCH OF DOUBTFUL-LOOKING GUYS ENTERED THE CHOKEN TEMPLE IN AUGUST OF THE SAME YEAR.

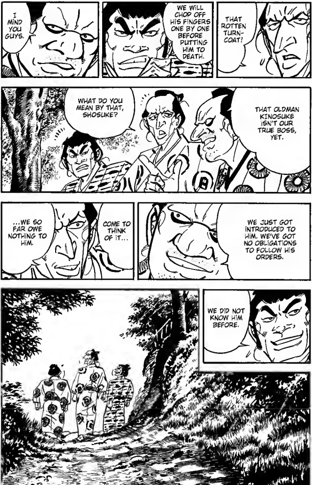

ピ
I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU GUYS.
THERE IS MUCH TO BE DESIRED FOR THIS TEMPLE TO BE AN IDEAL HIDE OUT, I KNOW.
IT'S A SAFE PLACE, AT LEAST, THOUGH.
I TRIED TO RAKE UP AS MANY BOYS AS POSSIBLE TO FACILITATE YOUR UPCOMING PROJECT. LOT OF MY GANG BOYS ARE AWAY FROM EDO FOR THE TIME BEING AS YOU KNOW.
BUT THESE THREE FORMER NOZUCHI GANG GUYS ARE THOROUGHLY RECOMMENDABLE.
THEY ARE EXPERIENCED GO DOWN BREAKERS.

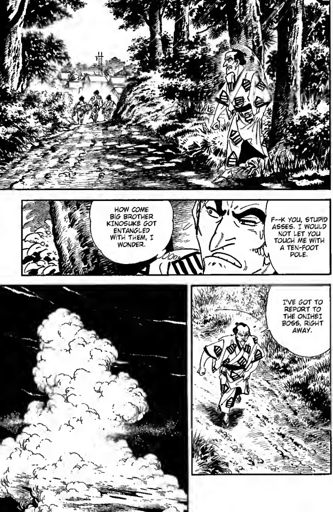

INTRODUCE YOURSELVES BOYS.
SHOSUKE IS MY NAME.
CALL ME GONSHICHI, PLEASE.
HOW DO YOU DO. SHIGETARO, THAT'S ME.
YOU ARE ALL HIRED.
BUT BEFORE WE KICK OFF TOGETHER, THERE IS ONE POINT. I WANT TO STRAIGHTEN OUT WITH YOU GUYS.
HOW COME YOU THREE DECIDED TO REMAIN IN EDO...
...WHILE MOST OF YOUR COMRADES WERE ROUNDED UP?
WE DECIDED TO REMAIN IN EDO IN ORDER TO PUNISH A BASTARD CALLED KUMEHACHI.
HE USED TO BE OUR COMRADE.
I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS THAT BAD.
THAT BASTARD BLABBED A LOT OF NONSENSE IN PRISON.
AS A RESULT, OUR BOSSMAN AND BROTHER UMEKICHI WERE EXECUTED.
WE HAVE GOT TO MAKE KUMEHACHI PAY THE PRICE.

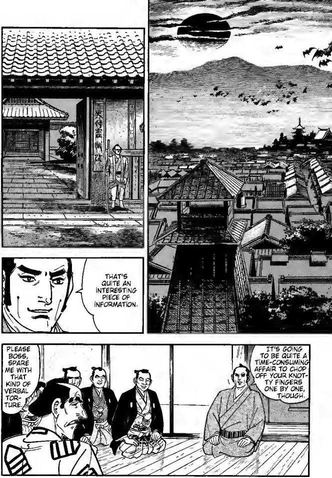

LAST YEAR, I BUMPED INTO KUME-HACHI-SAN...
...IN SHIZUOKA ON MY WAY FROM KYOTO TO EDO.
IN SHIZUOKA OF ALL PLACES!
!!
HE WAS TRAVELLING WITH AN IMPRESSIVE LOOKING SAMURAI...
...WHO, I GUESS, WAS ONIHEI THE COP CHIEF.
HE WAS ACTING AS A HERALD TO THE ROW OF PALANQUINS CARRYING YOUR COMRADES IN CAPTIVITY TO EDO.
THAT BASTARD KMEHACHI! COPS LET HIM WALK ABOUT SCOT FREE.
HE IS NOW A NEMESIS HAVING TEAMED UP WITH ONIHEI.
A ROTTEN TURNCOAT, HE IS!
TELL ME, BROTHER KINOSUKE...
I CAN DIVULGE JUST BETWEEN YOU PEOPLE AND ME...
...WHAT THE CLOUT OF OUR UP-COMING PROJECT IS.
...WE ARE GOING TO HIT THE GODOWN OF A CANDLE DEALER CALLED SANTOKUYA.
THERE ARE TONS OF GOLD NUGGETS LYING THERE.

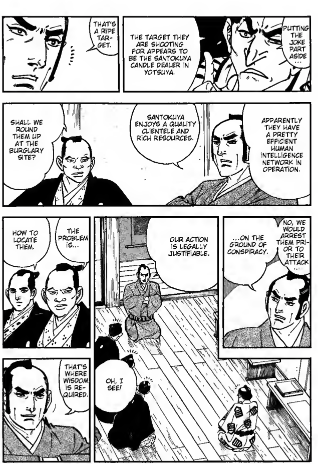

THE SANTOKUYA, LOCATED IN YOTSUYA NEAR THE EDO CASTLE, WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE EARLY SIXTEEN HUNDREDS,...
三徳屋
...AND DOING BUSINESS WITH THE SHOGUNATE AND A NUMBER OF LEADING DAIMYO'S.
蠟燭問屋
三徳屋
SANTOKUYA'S SUPER-BRIGHT BRAND CANDLES ARE SOLD ONLY TO THE SAMURAI CLASS CLIENTELE...
...YIELDING A HUGE PROFIT.

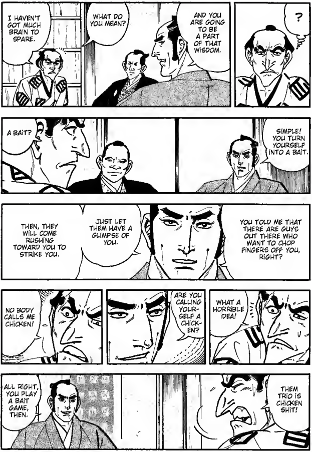

I USED TO TAKE CARE OF THE NOW-DECEASED CHIEF CLERK OF SANTOKUYA AROUND THE GAMBLING TABLE.
THAT'S WHERE THE INFORMATION CAME THROUGH.
THE DEAD MAN CANNOT BE OUR GUIDE FOR THE UPCOMING ACTION, THOUGH.
CAN'T YOU THINK OF ANYBODY...
...CAPABLE OF DOING THE RECONNAISSANCE FOR US?
I CAN RECOMMEND MASSEUR HIKONDICHI WHO GIVES CATERING MASSAGE SERVICES.
HAVE THIS MASSEUR GUY SETTLE DOWN IN A NEST IN YOTSUYA CLOSE TO SANTOKUYA.
YES, BIG BROTHER!

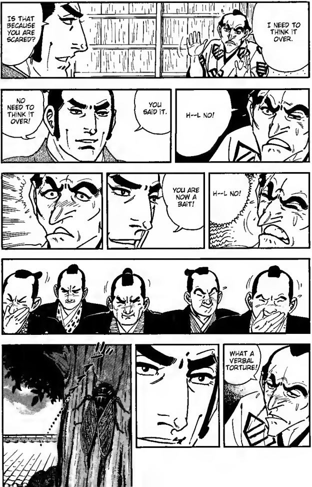

I MIND YOU GUYS.
WE WILL CHOP OFF HIS FINGERS ONE BY ONE BEFORE PUTTING HIM TO DEATH.
THAT ROTTEN TURNCOAT!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT, SHOSUKE?
THAT OLDMAN KINOSUKE ISN'T OUR TRUE BOSS, YET.
COME TO THINK OF IT…
…WE SO FAR OWE NOTHING TO HIM.
WE JUST GOT INTRODUCED TO HIM. WE'VE GOT NO OBLIGATIONS TO FOLLOW HIS ORDERS.
WE DID NOT KNOW HIM BEFORE.

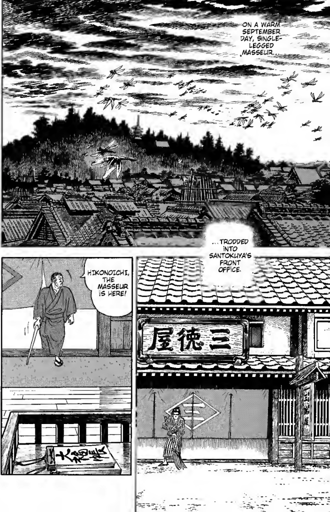

F--K YOU, STUPID ASSES. I WOULD NOT LET YOU TOUCH ME WITH A TEN-FOOT POLE.
HOW COME BIG BROTHER KINOSUKE GOT ENTANGLED WITH THEM, I WONDER.
I'VE GOT TO REPORT TO THE ONIHEI BOSS, RIGHT AWAY.

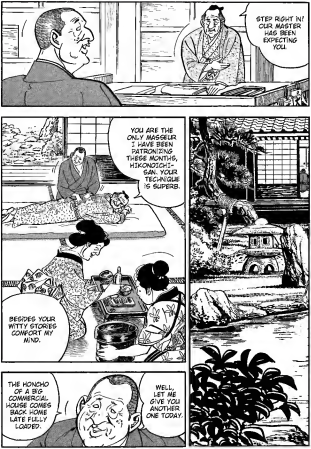

THAT'S QUITE AN INTERESTING PIECE OF INFORMATION.
IT'S GOING TO BE QUITE A TIME-CONSUMING AFFAIR TO CHOP OFF YOUR KNOTTY FINGERS ONE BY ONE, THOUGH.
PLEASE BOSS, SPARE ME WITH THAT KIND OF VERBAL TORTURE.

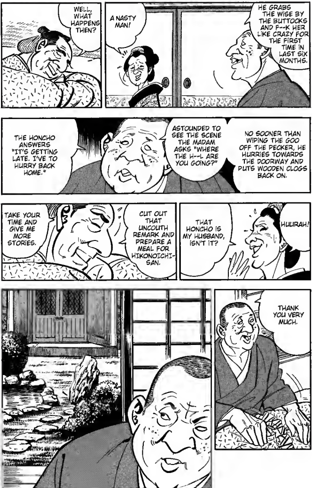

PUTTING THE JOKE PART ASIDE ...
THE TARGET THEY ARE SHOOTING FOR APPEARS TO BE THE SANTOKUYA CANDLE DEALER IN YOTSUYA.
THAT'S A RIPE TARGET.
APPARENTLY THEY HAVE A PRETTY EFFICIENT HUMAN INTELLIGENCE NETWORK IN OPERATION.
SANTOKUYA ENJOYS A QUALITY CLIENTELE AND RICH RESOURCES.
SHALL WE ROUND THEM UP AT THE BURGLARY SITE?
NO, WE WOULD ARREST THEM PRIOR TO THEIR ATTACK ...
...ON THE GROUND OF CONSPIRACY.
OUR ACTION IS LEGALLY JUSTIFIABLE.
OH, I SEE!
THE PROBLEM IS...
HOW TO LOCATE THEM.
THAT'S WHERE WISDOM IS REQUIRED.

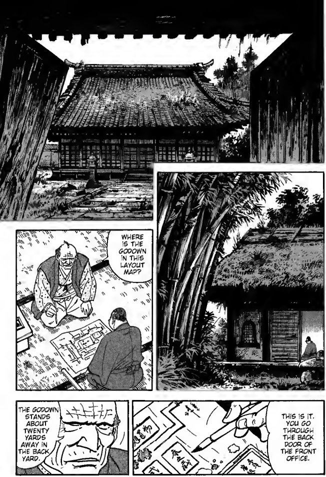

?
AND YOU ARE GOING TO BE A PART OF THAT WISDOM.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I HAVEN'T GOT MUCH BRAIN TO SPARE.
SIMPLE! YOU TURN YOURSELF INTO A BAIT.
A BAIT?
YOU TOLD ME THAT THERE ARE GUYS OUT THERE WHO WANT TO CHOP FINGERS OFF YOU, RIGHT?
JUST LET THEM HAVE A GLIMPSE OF YOU.
THEN, THEY WILL COME RUSHING TOWARD YOU TO STRIKE YOU.
WHAT A HORRIBLE IDEA!
ARE YOU CALLING YOURSELF A CHICKEN?
NO BODY CALLS ME CHICKEN!
THEM TRIO IS CHICKEN SHIT!
ALL RIGHT, YOU PLAY A BAIT GAME, THEN.

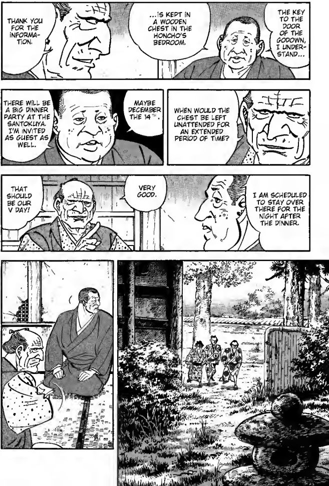

I NEED TO THINK IT OVER.
IS THAT BECAUSE YOU ARE SCARED?
H--L NO!
YOU SAID IT.
NO NEED TO THINK IT OVER!
H--L NO!
YOU ARE NOW A BAIT!
WHAT A VERBAL TORTURE!

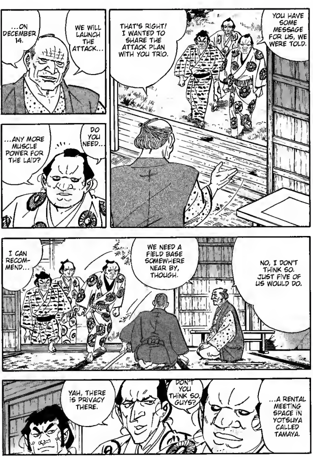

ON A WARM SEPTEMBER DAY, SINGLE-LEGGED MASSEUR...
...TRODDED INTO SANTOKUYA'S FRONT OFFICE.
三徳屋
三
HIKONOICHI, THE MASSEUR IS HERE!

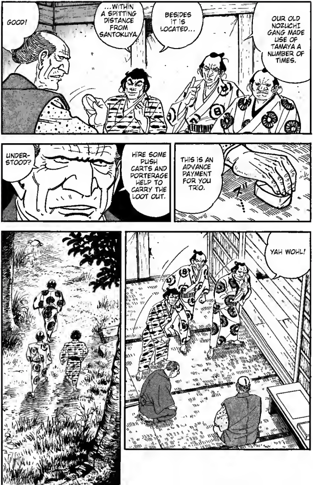

STEP RIGHT IN! OUR MASTER HAS BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
YOU ARE THE ONLY MASSEUR I HAVE BEEN PATRONIZING THESE MONTHS, HIKONOICHI-SAN. YOUR TECHNIQUE IS SUPERB.
BESIDES YOUR WITTY STORIES COMFORT MY MIND.
WELL, LET ME GIVE YOU ANOTHER ONE TODAY.
THE HONCHO OF A BIG COMMERCIAL HOUSE COMES BACK HOME LATE FULLY LOADED.

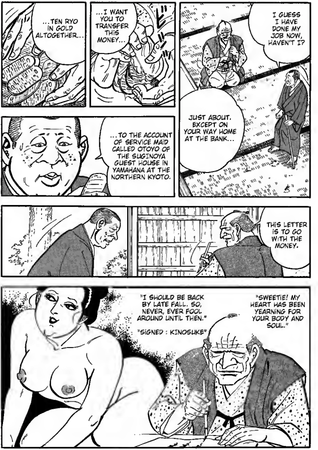

HE GRABS THE WISE BY THE BUTTOCKS AND F--K HER LIKE CRAZY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LAST SIX MONTHS.
A NASTY MAN!
WELL, WHAT HAPPENS THEN?
NO SOONER THAN WIPING THE GOO OFF THE PECKER, HE HURRIES TOWARDS THE DOORWAY AND PUTS WOODEN CLOGS BACK ON.
ASTOUNDED TO SEE THE SCENE THE MADAM ASKS "WHERE THE H--L ARE YOU GOING?"
THE HONCHO ANSWERS "IT'S GETTING LATE. I'VE TO HURRY BACK HOME."
HUURAH!
THAT HONCHO IS MY HUSBAND, ISN'T IT?
CUT OUT THAT UNCOUTH REMARK AND PREPARE A MEAL FOR HIKONOICHI-SAN.
TAKE YOUR TIME AND GIVE ME MORE STORIES.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

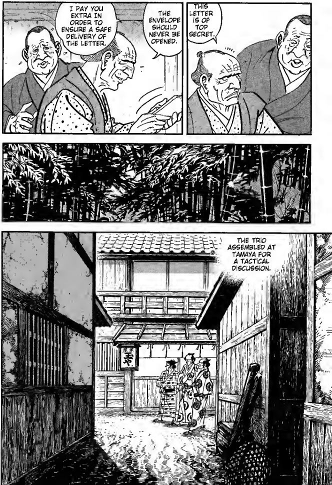

WHERE IS THE GODOWN IN THIS LAYOUT MAP?
THIS IS IT. YOU GO THROUGH THE BACK DOOR OF THE FRONT OFFICE.
THE GODOWN STANDS ABOUT TWENTY YARDS AWAY IN THE BACK YARD.

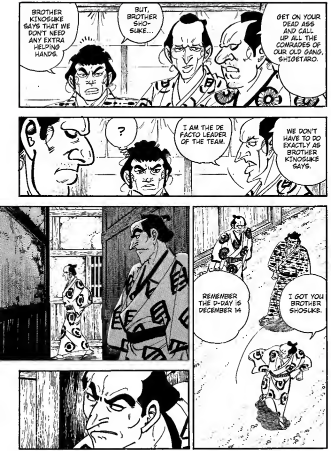

THE KEY TO THE DOOR OF THE GODOWN, I UNDERSTAND...
...IS KEPT IN A WOODEN CHEST IN THE HONCHO'S BEDROOM.
THANK YOU FOR THE INFORMATION.
WHEN WOULD THE CHEST BE LEFT UNATTENDED FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME?
MAYBE DECEMBER THE 14TH.
THERE WILL BE A BIG DINNER PARTY AT THE SANTOKUYA. I'M INVITED AS GUEST AS WELL.
I AM SCHEDULED TO STAY OVER THERE FOR THE NIGHT AFTER THE DINNER.
VERY GOOD.
THAT SHOULD BE OUR V DAY!

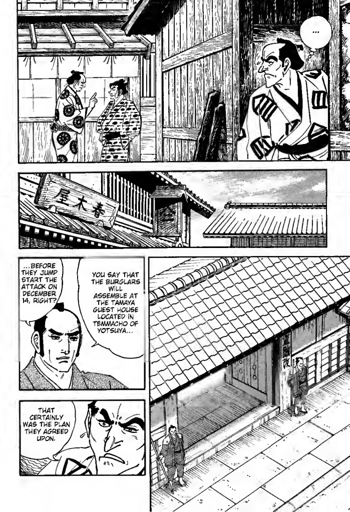

YOU HAVE SOME MESSAGE FOR US, WE WERE TOLD.
THAT'S RIGHT! I WANTED TO SHARE THE ATTACK PLAN WITH YOU TRIO.
WE WILL LAUNCH THE ATTACK...
...ON DECEMBER 14.
DO YOU NEED...
...ANY MORE MUSCLE POWER FOR THE LAID?
NO, I DON'T THINK SO. JUST FIVE OF US WOULD DO.
WE NEED A FIELD BASE SOMEWHERE NEAR BY, THOUGH.
I CAN RECOMMEND...
...A RENTAL MEETING SPACE IN YOTSUYA CALLED TAMAYA.
DON'T YOU THINK SO, GUYS?
YAH, THERE IS PRIVACY THERE.

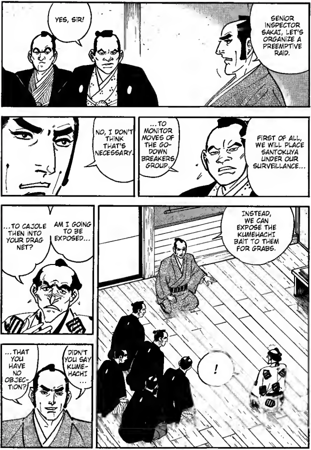

OUR OLD NOZUCHI GANG MADE USE OF TAMAYA A NUMBER OF TIMES.
BESIDES IT IS LOCATED...
...WITHIN A SPITTING DISTANCE FROM SANTOKUYA.
GOOD!
THIS IS AN ADVANCE PAYMENT FOR YOU TRIO.
HIRE SOME PUSH CARTS AND PORTERAGE HELP TO CARRY THE LOOT OUT.
UNDERSTOOD?
YAH WOHL!

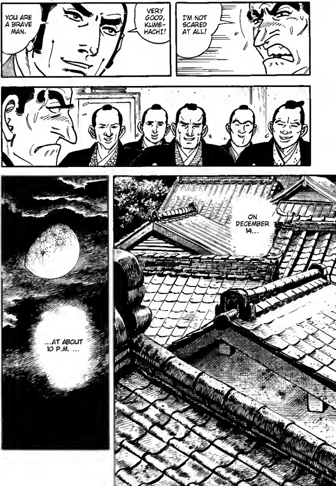

...TEN RYO IN GOLD ALTOGETHER...
...I WANT YOU TO TRANSFER THIS MONEY...
...TO THE ACCOUNT OF SERVICE MAID CALLED OTOYO OF THE SUGINOYA GUEST HOUSE IN YAMAHANA AT THE NORTHERN KYOTO.
I GUESS I HAVE DONE MY JOB NOW, HAVEN'T I?
JUST ABOUT. EXCEPT ON YOUR WAY HOME AT THE BANK...
THIS LETTER IS TO GO WITH THE MONEY.
"SWEETIE! MY HEART HAS BEEN YEARNING FOR YOUR BODY AND SOUL."
"I SHOULD BE BACK BY LATE FALL. SO, NEVER, EVER FOOL AROUND UNTIL THEN."
"SIGNED : KINOSUKE"

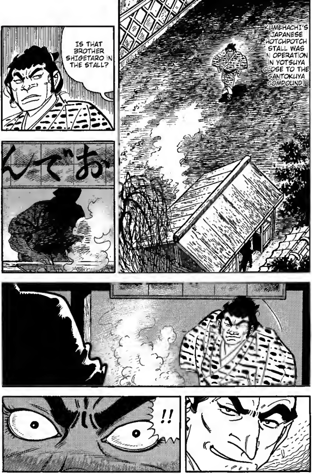

I PAY YOU EXTRA IN ORDER TO ENSURE A SAFE DELIVERY OF THE LETTER.
THE ENVELOPE SHOULD NEVER BE OPENED.
THIS LETTER IS OF TOP SECRET.
THE TRIO ASSEMBLED AT TAMAYA FOR A TACTICAL DISCUSSION.
玉や

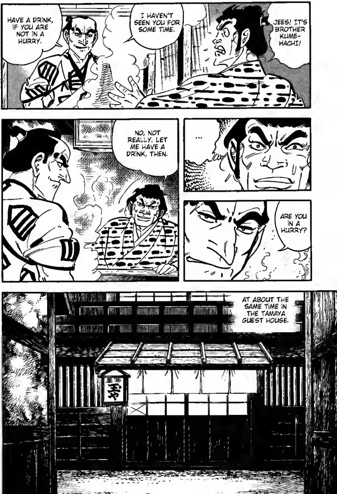

GET ON YOUR DEAD ASS AND CALL UP ALL THE COMRADES OF OUR OLD GANG, SHIGETARO.
BUT, BROTHER SHOSUKE...
BROTHER KINOSUKE SAYS THAT WE DON'T NEED ANY EXTRA HELPING HANDS.
WE DON'T HAVE TO DO EXACTLY AS BROTHER KINOSUKE SAYS.
I AM THE DE FACTO LEADER OF THE TEAM.
?
REMEMBER THE D-DAY IS DECEMBER 14
I GOT YOU BROTHER SHOSUKE.

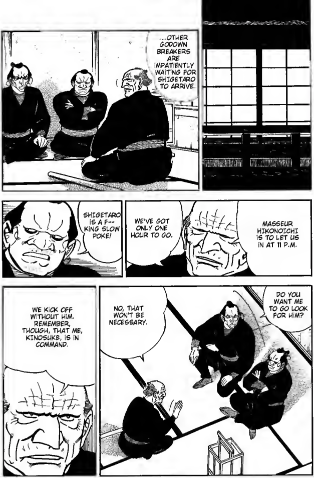

...
春木屋
YOU SAY THAT THE BURGLARS WILL ASSEMBLE AT THE TAMAYA GUEST HOUSE LOCATED IN TEMMACHO OF YOTSUYA...
...BEFORE THEY JUMP START THE ATTACK ON DECEMBER 14, RIGHT?
THAT CERTAINLY WAS THE PLAN THEY AGREED UPON.

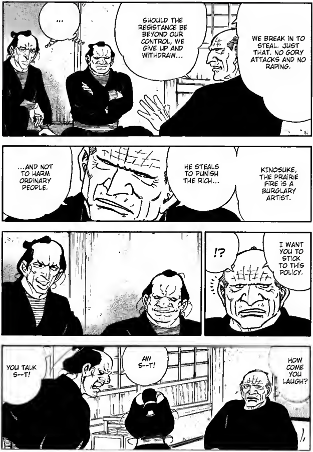

SENIOR INSPECTOR SAKAI, LET'S ORGANIZE A PREEMPTIVE RAID.
YES, SIR!
FIRST OF ALL, WE WILL PLACE SANTOKUYA UNDER OUR SURVEILLANCE...
...TO MONITOR MOVES OF THE GO-DOWN BREAKERS GROUP.
NO, I DON'T THINK THAT'S NECESSARY.
INSTEAD, WE CAN EXPOSE THE KUMEHACHI BAIT TO THEM FOR GRABS.
!
AM I GOING TO BE EXPOSED...
...TO CAJOLE THEN INTO YOUR DRAG NET?
DIDN'T YOU SAY KUMEHACHI...
...THAT YOU HAVE NO OBJECTION?

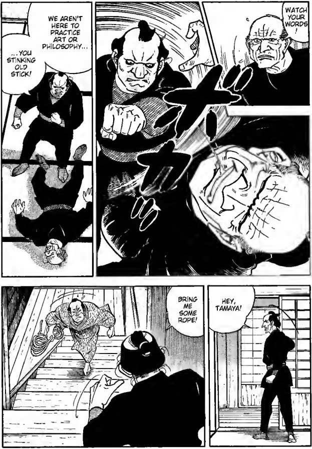

I'M NOT SCARED AT ALL!
VERY GOOD, KUMEHACHI!
YOU ARE A BRAVE MAN.
ON DECEMBER 14...
...AT ABOUT 10 P.M. ...

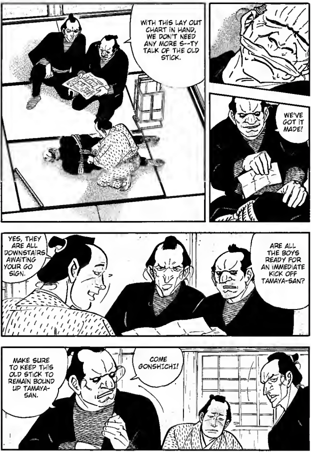

KUMEHACHI'S JAPANESE HOTCHPOTCH STALL WAS IN OPERATION IN YOTSUYA CLOSE TO THE SANTOKUYA COMPOUND.
IS THAT BROTHER SHIGETARO IN THE STALL?
んでお
!!

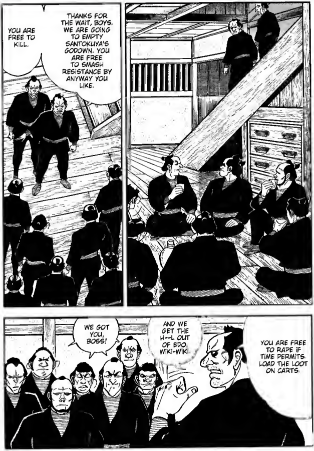

JEES! IT'S BROTHER KUME-HACHI!
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU FOR SOME TIME.
HAVE A DRINK, IF YOU ARE NOT IN A HURRY.
...
ARE YOU IN A HURRY?
NO, NOT REALLY. LET ME HAVE A DRINK, THEN.
AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME IN THE TAMAYA GUEST HOUSE.
玉や

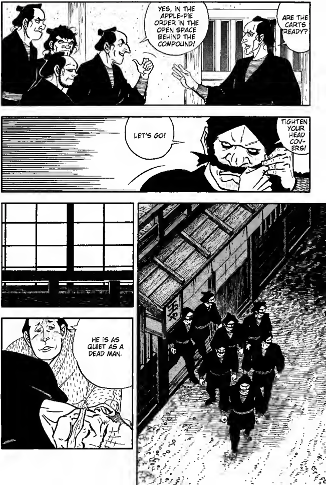

...OTHER GODOWN BREAKERS ARE IMPATIENTLY WAITING FOR SHIGETARO TO ARRIVE.
MASSEUR HIKONOICHI IS TO LET US IN AT 11 P.M.
WE'VE GOT ONLY ONE HOUR TO GO.
SHIGETARO IS A F--KING SLOW POKE!
DO YOU WANT ME TO GO LOOK FOR HIM?
NO, THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.
WE KICK OFF WITHOUT HIM. REMEMBER, THOUGH, THAT ME, KINOSUKE, IS IN COMMAND.

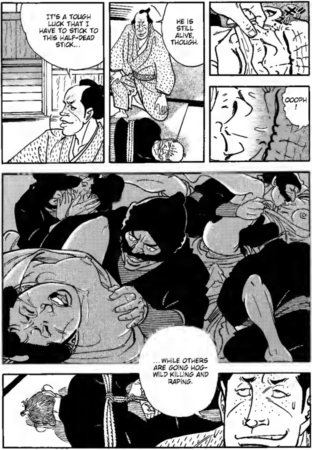

WE BREAK IN TO STEAL. JUST THAT. NO GORY ATTACKS AND NO RAPING.
SHOULD THE RESISTANCE BE BEYOND OUR CONTROL, WE GIVE UP AND WITHDRAW...
...
KINOSUKE, THE PRAIRIE FIRE IS A BURGLARY ARTIST.
HE STEALS TO PUNISH THE RICH...
...AND NOT TO HARM ORDINARY PEOPLE.
I WANT YOU TO STICK TO THIS POLICY.
!?
HOW COME YOU LAUGH?
AW S--T!
YOU TALK S--T!

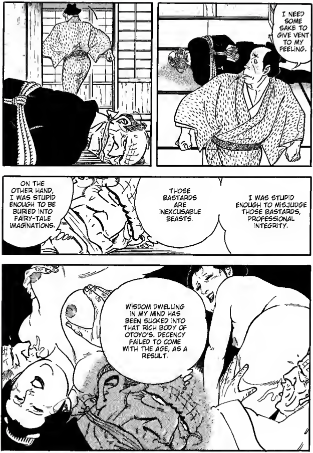

WE AREN'T HERE TO PRACTICE ART OR PHILOSOPHY...
...YOU STINKING OLD STICK!
WATCH YOUR WORDS!
HEY, TAMAYA!
BRING ME SOME ROPE!

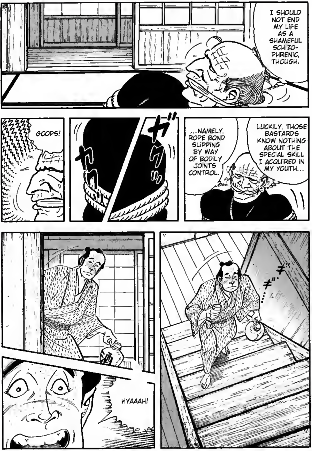

WITH THIS LAY OUT CHART IN HAND, WE DON'T NEED ANY MORE S--TY TALK OF THE OLD STICK.
WE'VE GOT IT MADE!
ARE ALL THE BOYS READY FOR AN IMMEDIATE KICK OFF TAMAYA-SAN?
YES, THEY ARE ALL DOWNSTAIRS AWAITING YOUR GO SIGN.
MAKE SURE TO KEEP THIS OLD STICK TO REMAIN BOUND UP TAMAYA-SAN.
COME GONSHICHI!

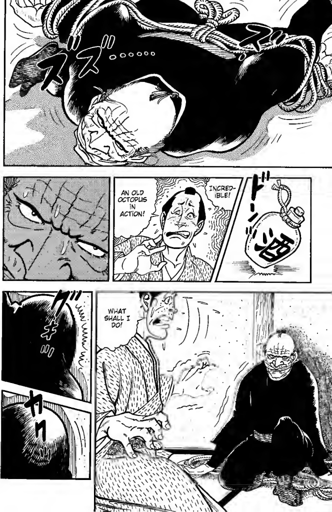

THANKS FOR THE WAIT, BOYS. WE ARE GOING TO EMPTY SANTOKUYA'S GODOWN. YOU ARE FREE TO SMASH RESISTANCE BY ANYWAY YOU LIKE.
YOU ARE FREE TO KILL.
YOU ARE FREE TO RAPE IF TIME PERMITS. LOAD THE LOOT ON CARTS.
WE GOT YOU, BOSS!
AND WE GET THE H--L OUT OF EDO. WIKI-WIKI.

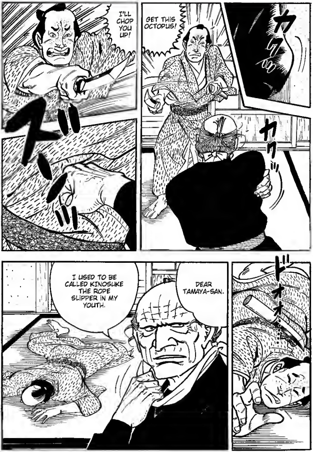

ARE THE CARTS READY?
YES, IN THE APPLE-PIE ORDER IN THE OPEN SPACE BEHIND THE COMPOUND!
TIGHTEN YOUR HEAD COVERS!
LET'S GO!
HE IS AS QUIET AS A DEAD MAN.

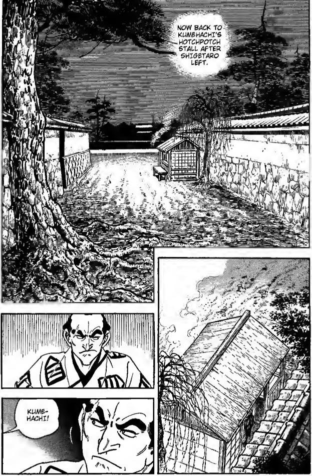

IT'S A TOUGH LUCK THAT I HAVE TO STICK TO THIS HALF-DEAD STICK...
HE IS STILL ALIVE, THOUGH.
OOOPH !
...WHILE OTHERS ARE GOING HOG-WILD KILLING AND RAPING.

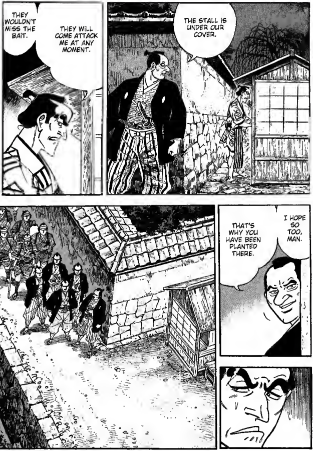

I NEED SOME SAKE TO GIVE VENT TO MY FEELING.
I WAS STUPID ENOUGH TO MISJUDGE THOSE BASTARDS, PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY.
THOSE BASTARDS ARE INEXCUSABLE BEASTS.
ON THE OTHER HAND, I WAS STUPID ENOUGH TO BE BURIED INTO FAIRY-TALE IMAGINATIONS.
WISDOM DWELLING IN MY MIND HAS BEEN SUCKED INTO THAT RICH BODY OF OTOYO'S. DECENCY FAILED TO COME WITH THE AGE, AS A RESULT.

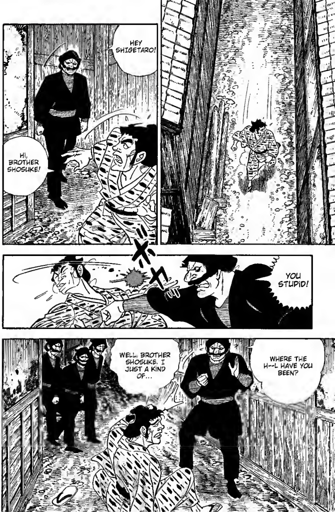

I SHOULD NOT END MY LIFE AS A SHAMEFUL SCHIZOPHRENIC, THOUGH.
LUCKILY, THOSE BASTARDS KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE SPECIAL SKILL I ACQUIRED IN MY YOUTH...
...NAMELY, ROPE BOND SLIPPING BY WAY OF BODILY JOINTS CONTROL.
ガクッ
カクッ
GOOPS!
ギ ギ...
酒
HYAAAH!

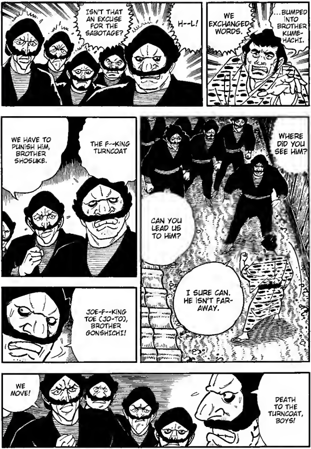

ズズ
ズ
ド〜ン
酒
INCREDIBLE!
AN OLD OCTOPUS IN ACTION!
WHAT SHALL I DO!
グギ
ヤリ

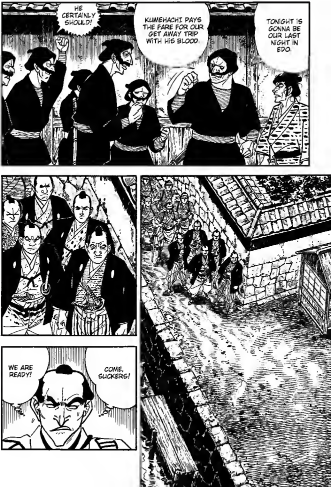

I'LL CHOP YOU UP!
ズッ
GET THIS OCTOPUS!
カクッ
カクッ
I USED TO BE CALLED KINOSUKE THE ROPE SLIPPER IN MY YOUTH.
DEAR TAMAYA-SAN.
ドォォ…

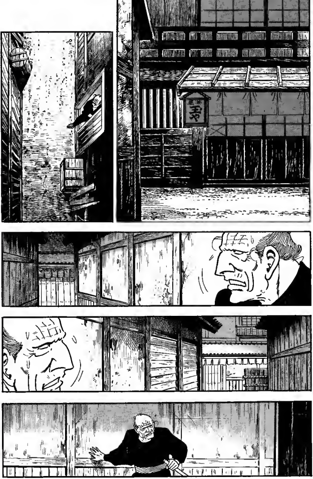

NOW BACK TO KUMEHACHI'S HOTCHPOTCH STALL AFTER SHIGETARO LEFT.
KUME-HACHI!


THEY WOULDN'T MISS THE BAIT.
THEY WILL COME ATTACK ME AT ANY MOMENT.
THE STALL IS UNDER OUR COVER.
THAT'S WHY YOU HAVE BEEN PLANTED THERE.
I HOPE SO TOO, MAN.


HEY SHIGETARO!
Hi, BROTHER SHOSUKE!
YOU STUPID!
WHERE THE H--L HAVE YOU BEEN?
WELL, BROTHER SHOSUKE, I JUST A KIND OF...


...BUMPED INTO BROTHER KUMEHACHI.
WE EXCHANGED WORDS.
H--L!
ISN'T THAT AN EXCUSE FOR THE SABOTAGE?
WHERE DID YOU SEE HIM?
CAN YOU LEAD US TO HIM?
I SURE CAN. HE ISN'T FARAWAY.
THE F--KING TURNCOAT
WE HAVE TO PUNISH HIM, BROTHER SHOSUKE.
JOE-F--KING TOE (JO-TO), BROTHER GONSHICHI!
DEATH TO THE TURNCOAT, BOYS!
WE MOVE!


TONIGHT IS GONNA BE OUR LAST NIGHT IN EDO.
KUMEHACHI PAYS THE FARE FOR OUR GET AWAY TRIP WITH HIS BLOOD.
HE CERTAINLY SHOULD!
COME, SUCKERS!
WE ARE READY!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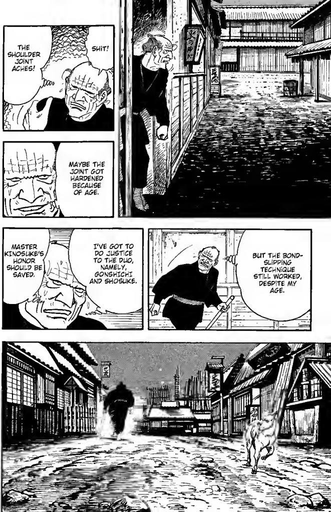
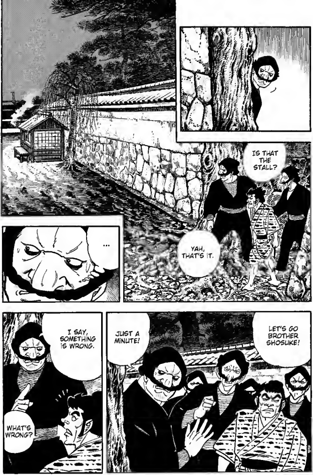
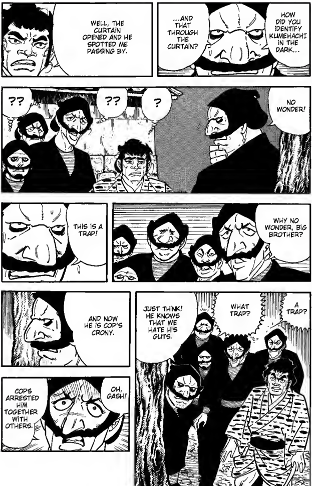
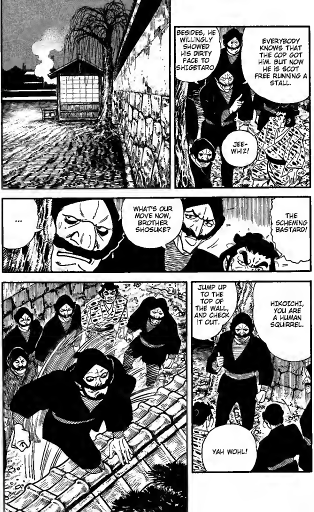
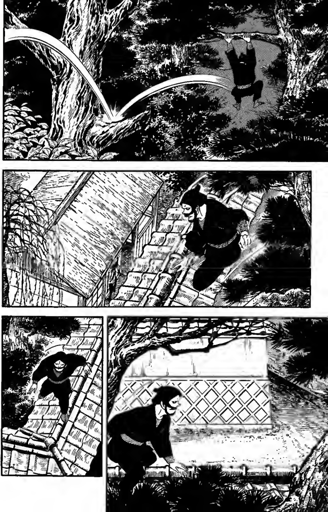
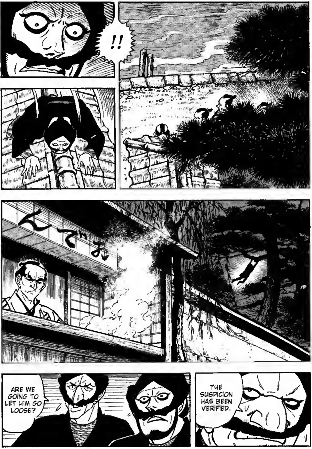

SHIT!
THE SHOULDER JOINT ACHES!
MAYBE THE JOINT GOT HARDENED BECAUSE OF AGE.
BUT THE BOND-SLIPPING TECHNIQUE STILL WORKED, DESPITE MY AGE.
I'VE GOT TO DO JUSTICE TO THE DUO, NAMELY, GONSHICHI AND SHOSUKE.
MASTER KINOSUKE'S HONOR SHOULD BE SAVED.

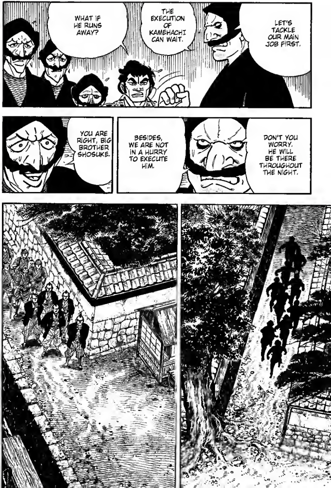

IS THAT THE STALL?
YAH, THAT'S IT.
...
LET'S GO BROTHER SHOSUKE!
JUST A MINUTE!
I SAY, SOMETHING IS WRONG.
WHAT'S WRONG?

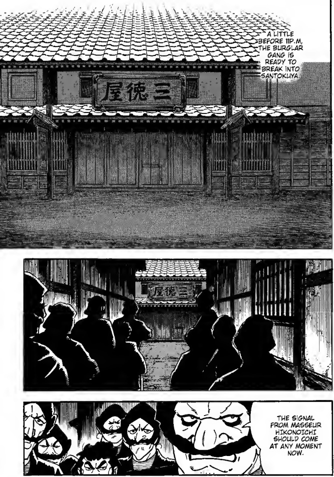

HOW DID YOU IDENTIFY KUMEHACHI IN THE DARK...
...AND THAT THROUGH THE CURTAIN?
WELL, THE CURTAIN OPENED AND HE SPOTTED ME PASSING BY.
NO WONDER!
?
??
??
WHY NO WONDER, BIG BROTHER?
THIS IS A TRAP!
A TRAP?
WHAT TRAP?
JUST THINK! HE KNOWS THAT WE HATE HIS GUTS.
AND NOW HE IS COP'S CRONY.
OH, GASH!
COPS ARRESTED HIM TOGETHER WITH OTHERS.

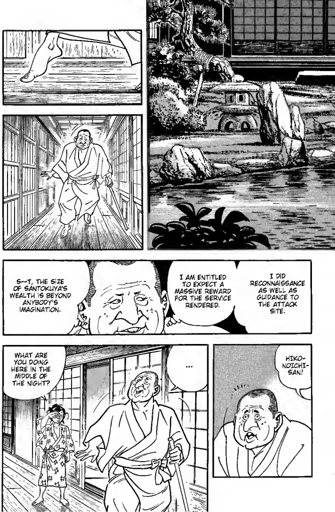

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT THE COP GOT HIM. BUT NOW HE IS SCOT FREE RUNNING A STALL.
BESIDES, HE WILLINGLY SHOWED HIS DIRTY FACE TO SHIGETARO
JEE-WHIZ!
THE SCHEMING BASTARD!
WHAT'S OUR MOVE NOW, BROTHER SHOSUKE?
...
HIKOICHI, YOU ARE A HUMAN SQUIRREL.
JUMP UP TO THE TOP OF THE WALL, AND CHECK IT OUT.
YAH WOHL!

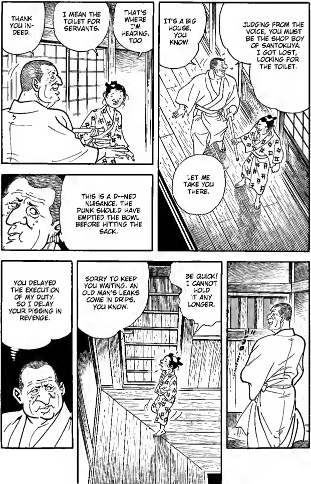


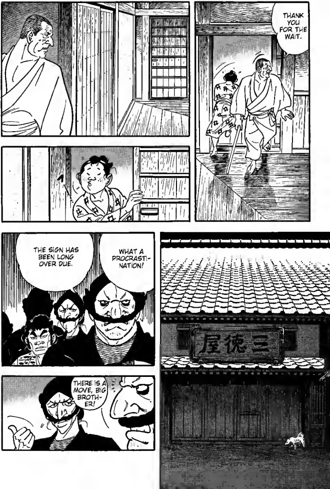

!!
んでお
ARE WE GOING TO LET HIM GO LOOSE?
THE SUSPICION HAS BEEN VERIFIED.

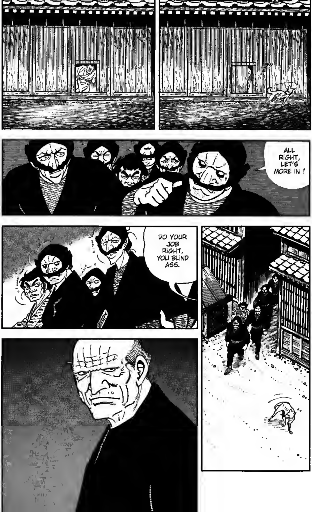

LET'S TACKLE OUR MAIN JOB FIRST.
THE EXECUTION OF KAMEHACHI CAN WAIT.
WHAT IF HE RUNS AWAY?
DON'T YOU WORRY. HE WILL BE THERE THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT.
BESIDES, WE ARE NOT IN A HURRY TO EXECUTE HIM.
YOU ARE RIGHT, BIG BROTHER SHOSUKE.

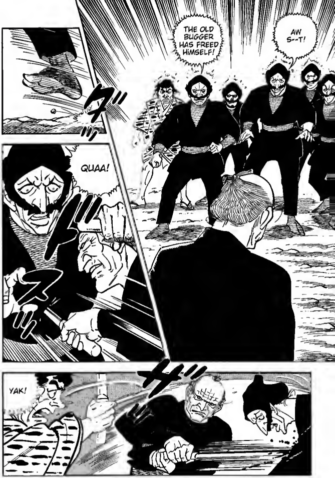

A LITTLE BEFORE 11P.M, THE BURGLAR GANG IS READY TO BREAK INTO SANTOKUYA.
三徳屋
三徳屋
THE SIGNAL FROM MASSEUR HIKONOICHI SHOULD COME AT ANY MOMENT NOW.

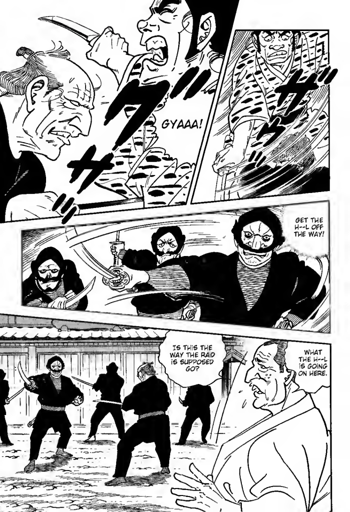

I DID RECONNAISSANCE AS WELL AS GUIDANCE TO THE ATTACK SITE.
I AM ENTITLED TO EXPECT A MASSIVE REWARD FOR THE SERVICE RENDERED.
S--T, THE SIZE OF SANTOKUYA'S WEALTH IS BEYOND ANYBODY'S IMAGINATION.
HIKO-NOICHI-SAN!
...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?

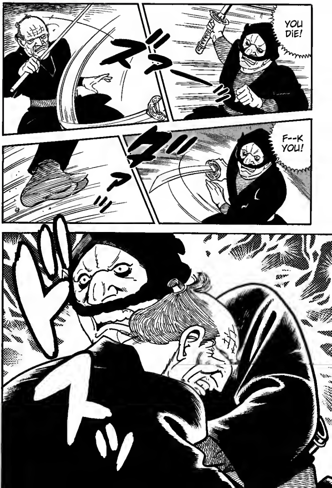

JUDGING FROM THE VOICE, YOU MUST BE THE SHOP BOY OF SANTOKUYA. I GOT LOST, LOCKING FOR THE TOILET.
IT'S A BIG HOUSE, YOU KNOW.
LET ME TAKE YOU THERE.
THANK YOU INDEED.
I MEAN THE TOILET FOR SERVANTS.
THAT'S WHERE I'M HEADING, TOO
THIS IS A D--NED NUISANCE. THE PUNK SHOULD HAVE EMPTIED THE BOWL BEFORE HITTING THE SACK.
BE QUICK! I CANNOT HOLD IT ANY LONGER.
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING. AN OLD MAN'S LEAKS COME IN DRIPS, YOU KNOW.
YOU DELAYED THE EXECUTION OF MY DUTY. SO I DELAY YOUR PISSING IN REVENGE.

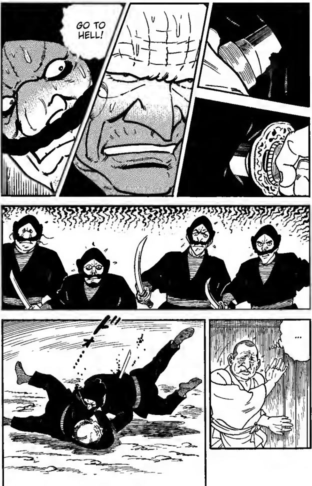

THANK YOU FOR THE WAIT.
三徳屋
WHAT A PROCRASTINATION!
THE SIGN HAS BEEN LONG OVER DUE.
THERE IS A MOVE, BIG BROTHER!

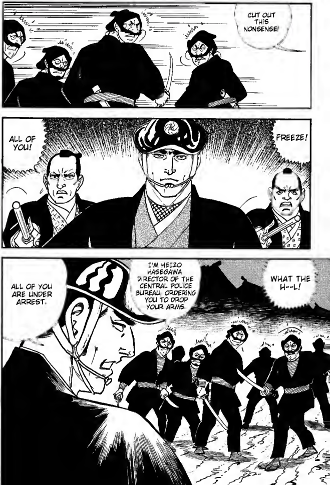

ALL RIGHT, LET'S MORE IN !
DO YOUR JOB RIGHT, YOU BLIND ASS.

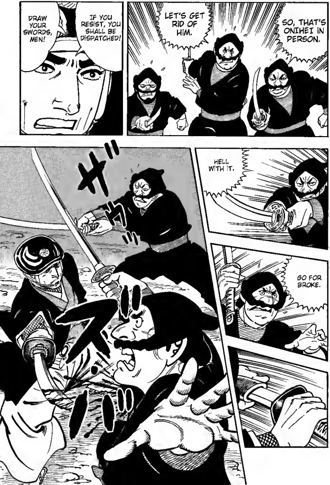

AW S--T!
THE OLD BUGGER HAS FREED HIMSELF!
QUAA!
YAK!

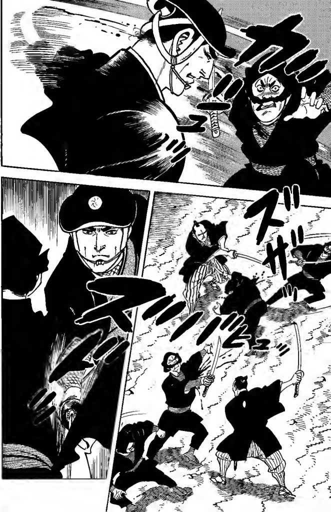

ザクッ
GYAAA!
グサッ
GET THE H--L OFF THE WAY!
WHAT THE H--L IS GOING ON HERE.
IS THIS THE WAY THE RAID IS SUPPOSED GO?

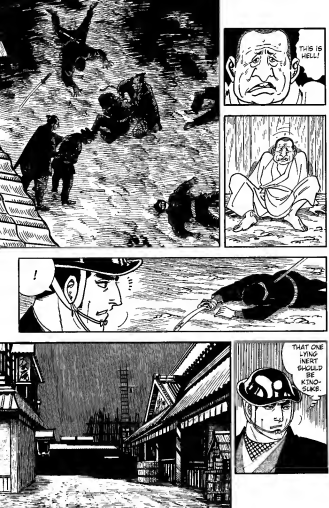

YOU DIE!
ズァーッ
F--K YOU!
ダッ
アッ
ドッ

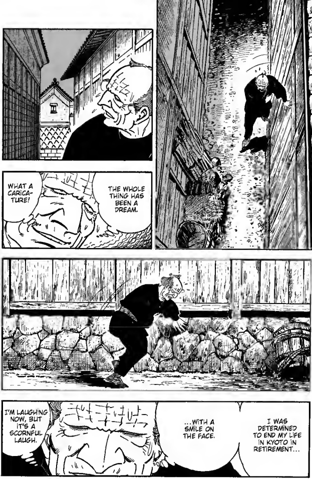

GO TO HELL!
...

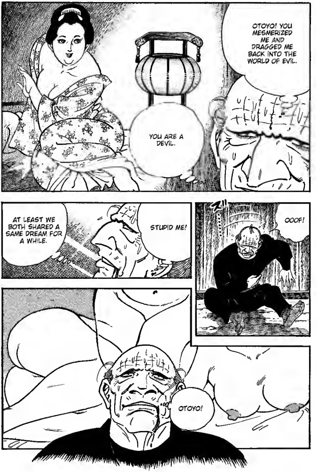

CUT OUT THIS NONSENSE!
ALL OF YOU!
FREEZE!
I'M HEIZO HASEGAWA DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL POLICE BUREAU, ORDERING YOU TO DROP YOUR ARMS.
ALL OF YOU ARE UNDER ARREST.
WHAT THE H--L!

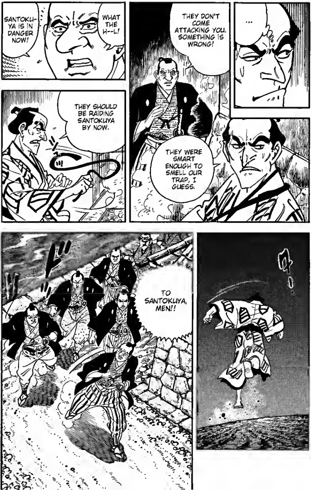

DRAW YOUR SWORDS, MEN!
IF YOU RESIST, YOU SHALL BE DISPATCHED!
LET'S GET RID OF HIM.
SO, THAT'S ONIHEI IN PERSON.
ザッ
ズ!!
!!
HELL WITH IT.
GO FOR BROKE.

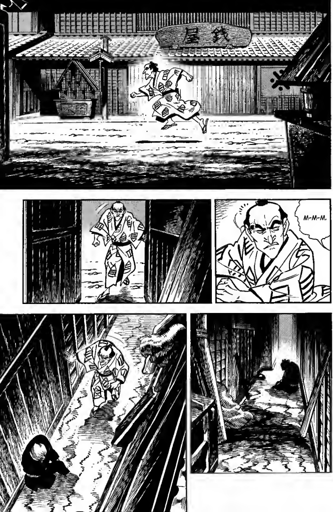

カーニュッ
ズザッ
スーーービュッ
ブッ

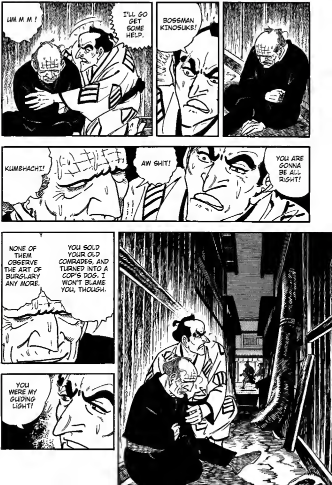

THIS IS HELL!
!
THAT ONE LYING INERT SHOULD BE KINOSUKE.

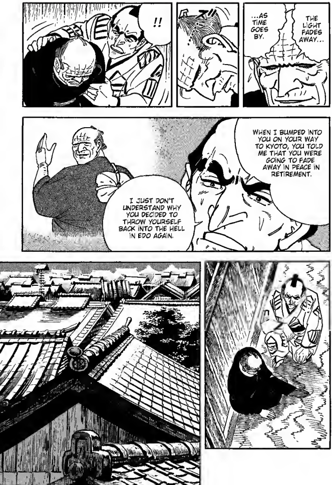

THE WHOLE THING HAS BEEN A DREAM.
WHAT A CARICATURE!
I WAS DETERMINED TO END MY LIFE IN KYOTO IN RETIREMENT...
...WITH A SMILE ON THE FACE.
I'M LAUGHING NOW, BUT IT'S A SCORNFUL LAUGH.

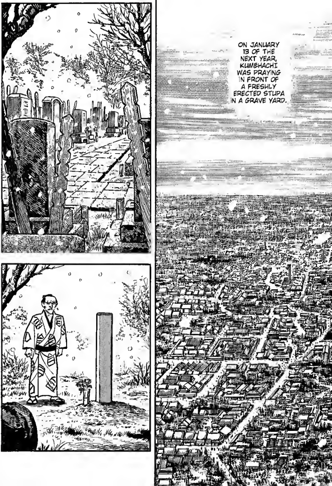

OTOYO! YOU MESMERIZED ME AND DRAGGED ME BACK INTO THE WORLD OF EVIL.
YOU ARE A DEVIL.
ズ!!
OOOF!
STUPID ME!
AT LEAST WE BOTH SHARED A SAME DREAM FOR A WHILE.
OTOYO!

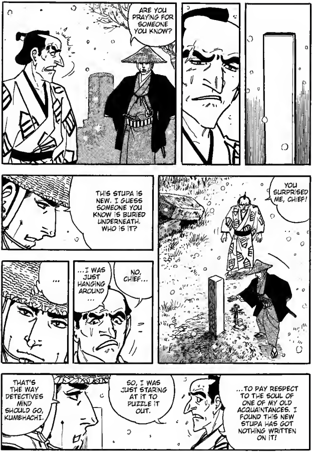

...
THEY DON'T COME ATTACKING YOU. SOMETHING IS WRONG!
WHAT THE H--L!
SANTOKUYA IS IN DANGER NOW!
THEY WERE SMART ENOUGH TO SMELL OUR TRAP, I GUESS.
THEY SHOULD BE RAIDING SANTOKUYA BY NOW.
ダッ
TO SANTOKUYA, MEN!!
ド

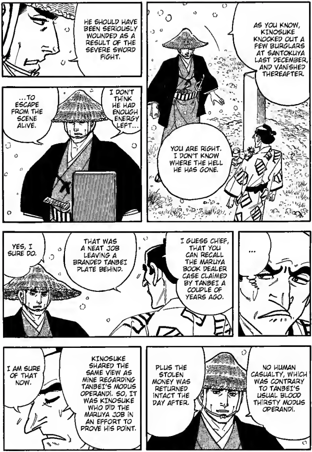

銭屋
M-M-M.

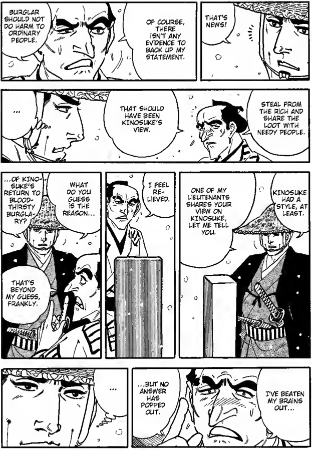

UM M M!
I'LL GO GET SOME HELP.
BOSSMAN KINOSUKE!
KUMEHACHI!
AW SHIT!
YOU ARE GONNA BE ALL RIGHT!
YOU SOLD YOUR OLD COMRADES, AND TURNED INTO A COP'S DOG. I WON'T BLAME YOU, THOUGH.
NONE OF THEM OBSERVE THE ART OF BURGLARY ANY MORE.
YOU WERE MY GUIDING LIGHT!

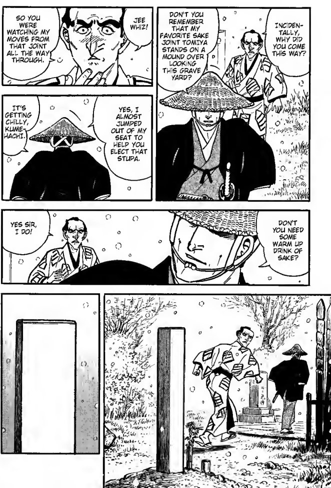

THE LIGHT FADES AWAY...
...AS TIME GOES BY.
!!
WHEN I BUMPED INTO YOU ON YOUR WAY TO KYOTO, YOU TOLD ME THAT YOU WERE GOING TO FADE AWAY IN PEACE IN RETIREMENT.
I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU DECIDED TO THROW YOURSELF BACK INTO THE HELL IN EDO AGAIN.

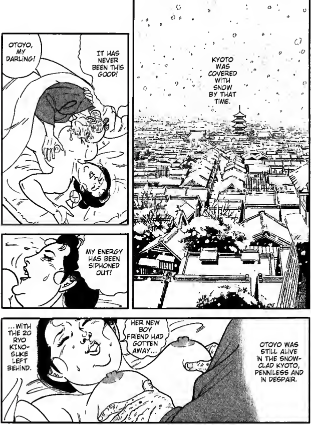

ON JANUARY 13 OF THE NEXT YEAR, KUMEHACHI WAS PRAYING IN FRONT OF A FRESHLY ERECTED STUPA IN A GRAVE YARD.


ARE YOU PRAYING FOR SOMEONE YOU KNOW?
YOU SURPRISED ME, CHIEF!
THIS STUPA IS NEW. I GUESS SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS BURIED UNDERNEATH. WHO IS IT?
NO, CHIEF...
...I WAS JUST HANGING AROUND ...
...
...TO PAY RESPECT TO THE SOUL OF ONE OF MY OLD ACQUAINTANCES. I FOUND THIS NEW STUPA HAS GOT NOTHING WRITTEN ON IT!
SO, I WAS JUST STARING AT IT TO PUZZLE IT OUT.
THAT'S THE WAY DETECTIVES MIND SHOULD GO, KUMEHACHI.


AS YOU KNOW, KINOSUKE KNOCKED OUT A FEW BURGLARS AT SANTOKUYA LAST DECEMBER, AND VANISHED THEREAFTER.
YOU ARE RIGHT. I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE HELL HE HAS GONE.
HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY WOUNDED AS A RESULT OF THE SEVERE SWORD FIGHT.
I DON'T THINK HE HAD ENOUGH ENERGY LEFT...
...TO ESCAPE FROM THE SCENE ALIVE.
...
I GUESS CHIEF, THAT YOU CAN RECALL THE MARUYA BOOK DEALER CASE CLAIMED BY TANBEI A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO.
YES, I SURE DO.
THAT WAS A NEAT JOB LEAVING A BRANDED TANBEI PLATE BEHIND.
NO HUMAN CASUALTY, WHICH WAS CONTRARY TO TANBEI'S USUAL BLOOD THIRSTY MODUS OPERANDI.
PLUS THE STOLEN MONEY WAS RETURNED INTACT THE DAY AFTER.
KINOSUKE SHARED THE SAME VIEW AS MINE REGARDING TANBEI'S MODUS OPERANDI. SO, IT WAS KINOSUKE WHO DID THE MARUYA JOB IN AN EFFORT TO PROVE HIS POINT.
I AM SURE OF THAT NOW.


THAT'S NEWS!
OF COURSE, THERE ISN'T ANY EVIDENCE TO BACK UP MY STATEMENT.
BURGLAR SHOULD NOT DO HARM TO ORDINARY PEOPLE.
STEAL FROM THE RICH AND SHARE THE LOOT WITH NEEDY PEOPLE.
THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN KINOSUKE'S VIEW.
...
KINOSUKE HAD A STYLE, AT LEAST.
ONE OF MY LIEUTENANTS SHARES YOUR VIEW ON KINOSUKE, LET ME TELL YOU.
I FEEL RELIEVED.
WHAT DO YOU GUESS IS THE REASON...
...OF KINOSUKE'S RETURN TO BLOODTHIRSTY BURGLARY?
THAT'S BEYOND MY GUESS, FRANKLY.
I'VE BEATEN MY BRAINS OUT...
...BUT NO ANSWER HAS POPPED OUT.
...


INCIDENTALLY, WHY DID YOU COME THIS WAY?
DON'T YOU REMEMBER THAT MY FAVORITE SAKE JOINT TOMIYA STANDS ON A MOUND OVER LOOKING THIS GRAVE YARD?
JEE WHIZ!
SO YOU WERE WATCHING MY MOVES FROM THAT JOINT ALL THE WAY THROUGH.
YES, I ALMOST JUMPED OUT OF MY SEAT TO HELP YOU ELECT THAT STUPA.
IT'S GETTING CHILLY, KUMEHACHI.
DON'T YOU NEED SOME WARM UP DRINK OF SAKE?
YES SIR, I DO!


KYOTO WAS COVERED WITH SNOW BY THAT TIME.
IT HAS NEVER BEEN THIS GOOD!
OTOYO, MY DARLING!
MY ENERGY HAS BEEN SIPHONED OUT!
OTOYO WAS STILL ALIVE IN THE SNOW-CLAD KYOTO, PENNILESS AND IN DESPAIR.
HER NEW BOY FRIEND HAD GOTTEN AWAY...
...WITH THE 20 RYO KINOSUKE LEFT BEHIND.

END

ONIHEI, THE DEVILISH BREAU CHIEF VOL.1

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